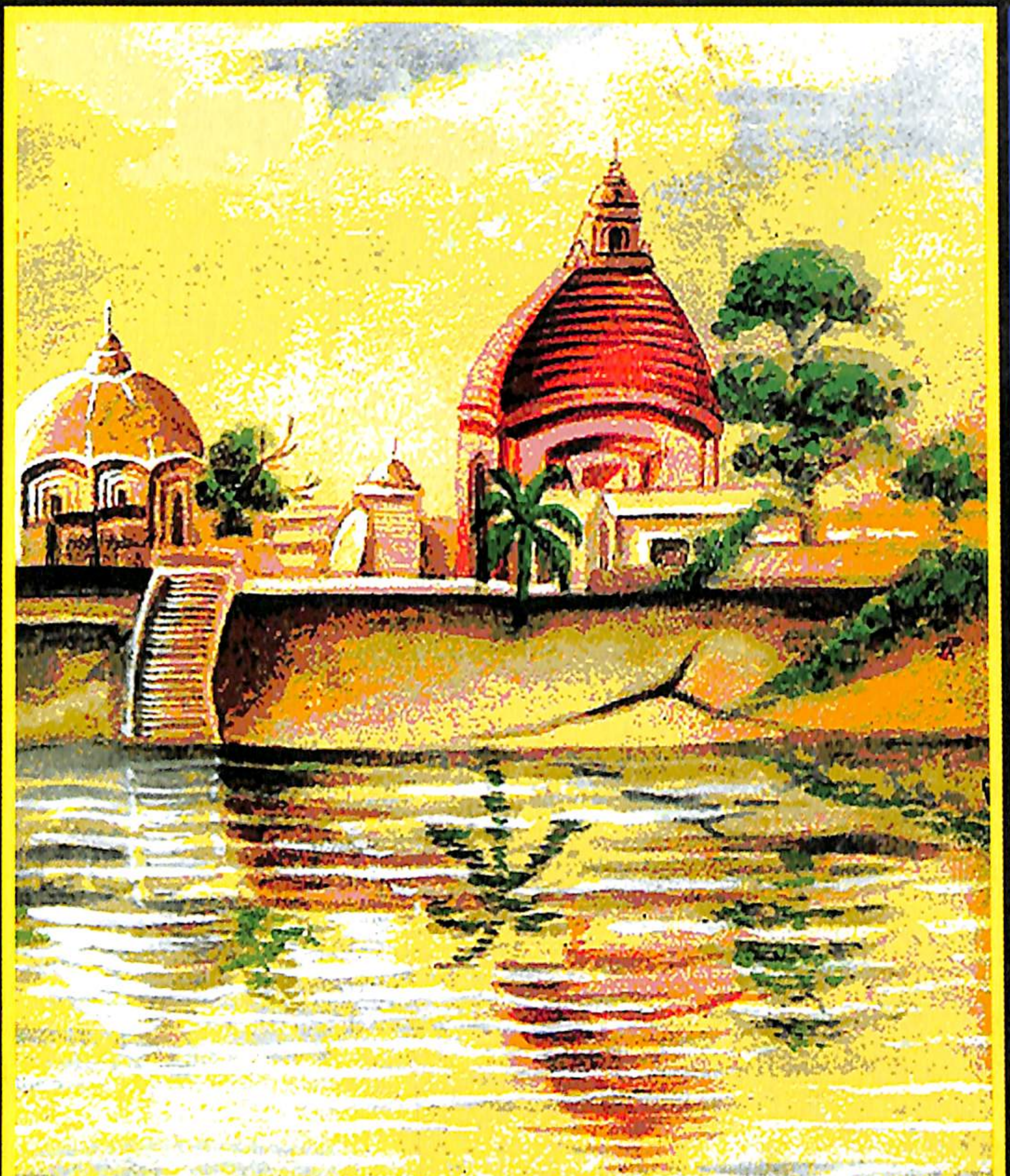
Mahapith Tarapith

of

Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay

Volume 1



Dipak Bhattacharya

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PUBLISHERS

MAHAPITH TARAPITH

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Universal Mother Goddess Tara and the place Tarapith in India where She is worshipped comprise the main subject matter of this book. Accordingly, these have been reflected in the cover page design.

The sketch of the Tarapith temple is gracefully placed in the central portion of the cover page of this book. This sketch was drawn by the celebrated sadhak, writer, and artist Sri Pramod Kumar Chattopadhyay in 1974 at the age of 90 years. In fact, he created this sketch based on his memory of Tarapith from 1910 for the cover page of the Bengali edition of this book. Thus, this magnificent sketch by a Tara sadhak has an enduring legacy.

The force whose sound-symbol is AUM is the great Goddess Tara. There are two strings of letter AUM in two sides of the cover page.

Tarama is second of Dasha-Mahavidyas or ten great cosmic powers and personalities of Jagadamba (Divine Mother Goddess of Universe) - Eternal Mother of all. Ten pairs of Lotus Feet representing Dasha Mahavidyas are drawn at the bottom of the cover page.

MAHAPITH TARAPITH

Volume 1

of

Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay

This is the most authentic and classic book on Universal Mother Goddess Tara, Shakti Pith Tarapith in India, and Shiva Avatara Sri Bamakhyapa

Originally written in Bengali language;
Translated into English
by

Dipak Bhattacharya

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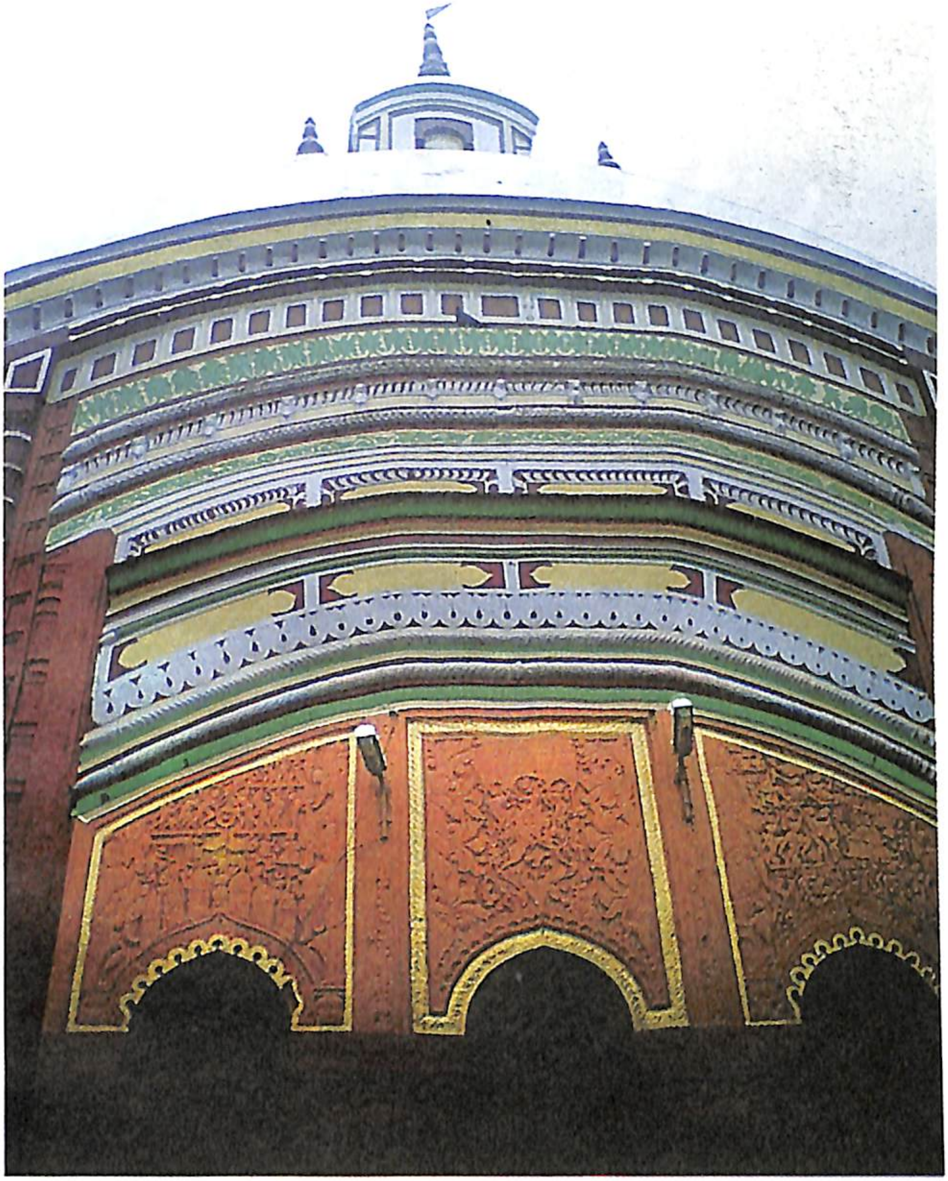
DEDICATION

Consistent with the original Bengali edition of this book, this English translation is also dedicated to the famous Tantrik scholar, wandering ascetic, writer, artist, and sadhak

Sri Pramod Kumar Chattopadhyay



Tarapith Temple in Bengal, India

Universal Mother Goddess Tara
at Tarapith in Bengal, India

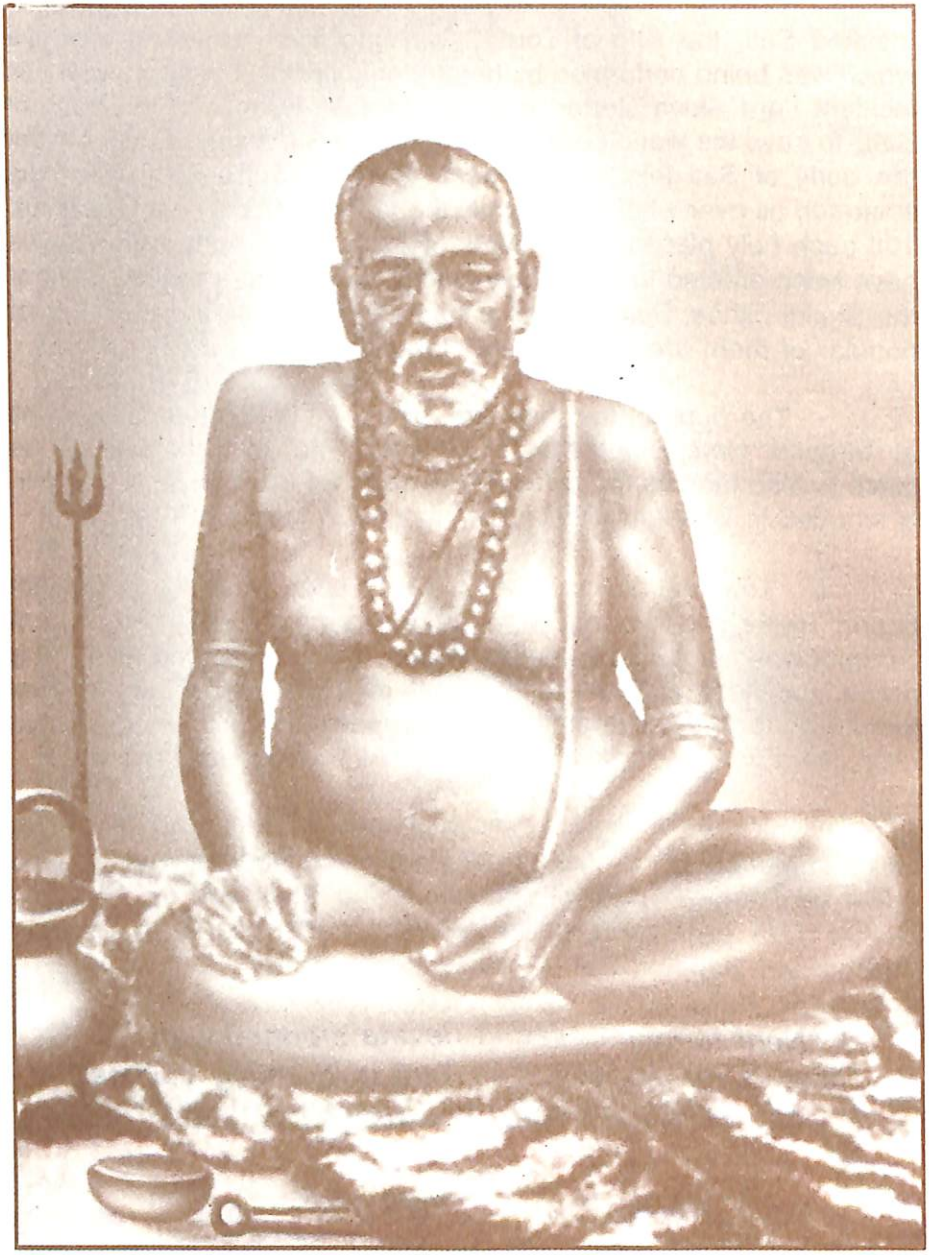
Insulted Sati, the wife of Lord Shiva, sacrificed herself at a yagya which was being performed by her father king Daksha. Angry with this incident Lord Shiva started a dance of destruction with the body of Sati. To save the world Lord Vishnu used his Sudarshan Chakra to cut the body of Sati into several parts. Parts of Sati's body was thus scattered all over what is presently the Indian subcontinent. There are 108 such holy places where parts of Sati's divine body fell. Temples have been erected in these holy places and they are called pithas or the Shakti pithas. Some of the pithas are in Bengal, India. The most popular of them are Kalighat and Tarapith.

The pupil of the third eye, or eye of knowledge, of Sati fell at Tarapith. Here Hindu Mother Goddess Tara is worshipped. This place is also famous for great Tantrik saint Sri Bamakhyapa. Tarapith is situated in Birbhum district and about 225 km from Kolkata.

The temple that was built by sage Vashishthadeva got buried under the ground with the passage of time. The current Tarapith was first built by Jaydatta Banik, a merchant who received a divine command from Tarama to set up a temple. A very special feature of Tarama of Tarapith signifying universal motherhood is that Lord Shiva lies in Her left lap like a child sucking Her breast.

Tarapith is regarded as Mahapith or siddhapith (place for enlightenment). This is an extremely holy place for all Hindus. Offering prayer at this Mahapith with complete dedication and full belief on Mother Tara or Tarama fulfills desires of both earthly enjoyment (bhukti) and final salvation (mukti).

"Nahi tarasama kachit devata siddhi-dayini" –
There is no goddess like Tara in granting success.



Shiva Avatara Sri Sri Bamakhyapa

Mahapith Tarapith
Volume 1

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PREFACE

by

Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay

Uniqueness of this Preface

I must humbly declare that this preface is based on my personal experience and realization. In fact, this is the foundation of the entire *Mahapith Tarapith* book.

For a long time, by the infinite grace of supreme Goddess Tarama and Shiva Avatara Sri Bamakhyapa, this author had to face a tough ordeal, gained hard true experience, and finally achieved realization through direct encounter. Tough ordeal of the author was orchestrated for three reasons – firstly, realization of super divinity of Tarapith; secondly, demonstration of the fact that, even today, the ever charming lila (supernatural activity) of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa has been continuing in Tarapith; thirdly, development of the author in all respects to make him worthy of writing a complete and authoritative book *Mahapith Tarapith*.

If author does not have true personal experience, realization, and total understanding, then on what basis he could write such a gigantic and authentic book like *Mahapith Tarapith*? Thus, Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa, right from the beginning, put me under difficult tests, practical experiences, and innumerable adverse circumstances to develop me slowly for a long time according to their wishes.

Thus, the preface of *Mahapith Tarapith* is an introduction to the existence and philosophy of life, experience and realization, ordeal and dependence, grace and refuge, and sadhana or spiritual discipline and siddhi or possession of occult powers. Consequentlythis preface is not like a traditional preamble of a story book or novel. It is certainly not a fabrication of imagination. Accordingly, this preface is unique and flows in its own style.

Summary

This majestic book *Mahapith Tarapith* could have been completed only by the endless grace of primordial universal Mother Tara. Also, in this respect, I must most reverentially recollect the infinite compassion of and divine communication with Sri Bamakhyapa. Basically, this work was possible due to unbounded divine grace of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa for a long time extending over 16 years. In fact, as Shakti (common name for Divine Mother Goddess) and Shiva are inseparable, Tarama in two forms – one as universal Mother Goddess Tara and the other as Shiva Avatara Sri Bamakhyapa – was always gracious to this humble child.

For a long time, starting from 19 December 1969 to present, I have been experiencing at every step their behind the scene presence. From the beginning to the end, for 16 years, they provided spontaneously countless spiritual principles and facts necessary to complete this gigantic work. In addition, with uncommon high speed and astonishment, they gracefully established connection for me with innumerable great siddha (perfected soul) sadhakas (aspirants of spiritual discipline) and sadhikas (female sadhakas) associated with Tarapith. These super level siddhas are blessed children of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa.

Thus, during my long time effort in collecting information and in writing *Mahapith Tarapith*, I have realized at every moment that the real author of this work is Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa, nobody else.

Actually, it is the revelation of their divine power through this humble person having some insignificant name and form. Let worldly people misunderstand me as "author" – that is the wish of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa, and this is indeed their mysterious lila. As a matter of fact, in this theatre of *Mahapith Tarapith*, I am just an active puppet in the divine hands of two behind the stage magicians – nothing more than that!

Many important events in my life – visit to Tarapith by the grace of Tarama, firm determination to write an authentic book *Mahapith Tarapith*, great effort in gathering information, association with many developmental projects of Tarapith, meeting with countless saints and pious people, commencement of the *Mahapith Tarapith* book, etc. had occurred in a predetermined colorful pattern; just like the waves of the ocean that kiss the shore one by one in an orderly fashion.

Many pious people told me that these amazing events are not possible unless there is my close connection with Tarapith in every birth. Normally, people come to visit Tarapith, perform darshana (devotional act of seeing) of deity, offer puja (worship), go to temple of Sri Bamakhyapa, and visit maha-shmashana (majestic cremation-ground); afterwards, they go back to home; some may even stay for a few days.

But in my case, Tarama had a completely opposite idea. Just after visiting Tarapith, the goal and style of my ordinary life of 34 years were transfigured. Actually, a new life was born. Tarama and Bamakhyapa became all to me and composing the *Mahapith Tarapith* became the supreme goal of my life. But the way Tarama transformed my life, it appeared that this was natural. Conversely, my preceding 34 years of life appeared unnatural. It is a matter of great fortune for me that, just in one day, Tarama made this majestic transformation possible and also made it permanent for rest of my life. I arrived, received grace, and finally submerged for ever in amrita (nectar) tattva (principle) of supreme goddess Tara.

Thus, Tarama destroyed my ordinary life of past 34 years but, at the same time, procreated a new life with much higher purpose and nobility. This process of destruction and procreation occurred on the 19 December of 1969 when Tarama attracted me to Tarapith. The history of this attraction is by no means less thrilling and dramatic. Therefore, I am stating this in short for the readers; besides, unless this dramatic event is not disclosed, this special lila of Tarama would remain unknown forever. Also, this event is the primary inspiring source of creation of the *Mahapith Tarapith.*

Background of Visiting Tarapith

It was the end of Bengali calendar month Agrahayan (November – December) of 1969. I was then editor of the Bengali spiritual magazine “Anandam” and recognized in the society as a poet and dramatist. But beyond this public recognition I had another world – that is the world of association with saints and pious people. I would leave everything and go to meet these spiritual persons; accordingly, I am fortunate to come across many sadhus (ascetics) and mahapurushas (spiritual masters) right from my childhood.

It was evening twilight of Agrahayan. One of my acquaintances came to see me. He talked about his guru who claimed himself as the greatest Tantrik (follower of Tantra, spiritual path of worshiping Shakti) of India. I could understand the confidence of this disciple about his guru. However, to verify the claim, I prepared to meet that Tantrik. He lived in Behala, suburb of Kolkata, where he established a Kali (one of the supreme Goddesses in Tantra) temple.

At the appointed time, I arrived with the disciple of the Tantrik. We started discussion in the Kali temple about Tantra sadhana (spiritual discipline). After a long discussion, he declared that he performed virachara sadhana (meaning there is no dogma, anything you do is okay), and gained yogik power of anima (ability to become small like atom) and laghima (ability to become lighter than air). In this connection, I respectfully told him that what he achieved was not enough to claim the superlative distinction of the greatest Tantrik.

There are different stages of spiritual growth in Tantra. dakshinachara (right-handed path) is the lowest stage. From this lowest stage, Tantrik progresses gradually through practice of many intermediate paths to virachara, and finally to the highest stage, divyachara (for practitioner of sattva-guna, almost like godhood). The supreme goal of Tantra sadhana is to reach from jivattva (individuality) to Shivattva (supreme reality). This Shivattva can be achieved only at the final stage of divyachara. There are many glorious examples of Tantra sadhakas who achieved this magnificent state of Shivattva. For example, Ramprasad, Kamalakanta, Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa, Sri Bamakhyapa, etc. I explained, since he could reach only up to virachara, and no way nearer to the state of these outstanding Tantriks, he was not worthy to call himself greatest Tantrik. Consequently, he agreed to my argument and admitted that his earlier claim was not right.

In the course of conversation, we discussed about Tara sadhana. Among all types of Tantrik sadhanas, the most hard, rough, and terrible one is this Tara sadhana; in comparison to this, Kali sadhana is much simpler. Thus, Tara sadhana can be performed only by mighty, high-spirited, and celibate sadhakas. This is definitely not suitable for weak, delicate, and non-celibate sadhakas. Indeed, there are serious cautions for this Tara sadhana in Tantrik scriptures. For example, in the course of Tara sadhana, if Tantrik makes mistake, Ugra-Tara would punish him severely. Also, he would suffer terribly not only in this life but also in many future births including downgraded birth as a beast.

At the end of discussion on Tara sadhana, suddenly, that Tantrik made reference of Tarapith. Also, he disclosed bitter experience of his sadhana at Tarapith. He mentioned about a particular place in the maha-shmashana of Tarapith; if somebody meditates in that place in the dark dead night during specific lunar day, he would never return. An invisible power lifts sadhaka and throws him out from asana (seat). Some say this invisible power is the guard of the maha-shmashana; others think as servant of Tarama. That Tantrik also had terrible experience of this particular place. Fortunately, due to his yogik power, he had narrowly escaped death. He mentioned also that Tarapith maha-shmashana is a very dangerous place; in special lunar days, divinity of maha-shmashana is revealed; in addition, a super-natural invisible power becomes active in dead night. At the end, he made it clear that he did not like Tarapith.

Suddenly, in a challenging mood, he suggested to me was I ready to go to Tarapith? Also, if I agreed to go, could I sit alone in that particular place in maha-shmashana during dead night of a special lunar day in next month? However, he made also a sarcastic remark, "If you have enough courage and power, only then think about it; because, Tarapith maha-shmashana is really a terrible place in dark dead night." I gracefully accepted his challenge. In response, he reminded me again, "Whoever goes there does not return" – therefore, for any unusual event he would not be responsible at all.

I agreed, but since I never went to Tarapith, I wanted to go with his disciples. Accordingly, it was decided that his dear disciple (who brought me to that Tantrik) along with some other devotees would take me to Tarapith on 18 December 1969. They would show me that particular place in Tarapith maha-shmashana, and I would sit there for meditation in the dead night. Also, they would keep eye on me from distance. I returned home after finalizing details for the trip to Tarapith but did not discuss with family members about this challenging endeavour.

Visiting Mahapith Tarapith

As planned, at 9 p.m. on 18 December 1969, I started from Kolkata for Tarapith with the disciple and devotees of that Tantrik. On the ever memorable morning of 19 December we arrived at Mahapith Tarapith.

This was my first visit to Tarapith. However, it appeared as if this divine place was known to me in all of my past lives. Naturally, I was thrilled with joy and astonishment. I went to the temple for darshana of Tarama and felt like coming back to the lap of eternal Mother. An unprecedented compulsive attraction flooded through my mind and body. Temple of Chandrachuhra, cottage of Sri Bamakhyapa, Jivitakunda, maha-shmashana, Sripadapadma, tomb of Sri Bamakhyapa, etc. looked like ever-familiar and ever-blissful places. Every corner of Tarapith, pious people, pandas (priests), birds and animals, trees, plants, even every dust particle of Tarapith appeared to be super sacred. In the divine atmosphere of Tarapith, I could perceive that great saying, "*Madhuvata ritayate*" – showering of sweet divine grace in all directions. Along with it, I was thrilled with the continuous charming humming sound of sacred word AUM (the most sacred word of Hinduism representing supreme God or Brahman).

Solemn Vow to Write a Book *Mahapith Tarapith*

At noon, we offered bhoga (food prepared with great devotion for offering to deity) to Tarama and accepted prasad (bhoga becomes prasad after acceptance by deity). Then I started enquiring about authentic books on this ancient Tantra pith Tarapith, Sri Bamakhyapa, and glorious lives of great saints associated with Tarapith. I could not find any authoritative book on Tarapith; only two ordinary books on Sri Bamakhyapa – "*Sri Bamlila*" and "*Tarapith Bhairav*" were available; although, these books contain many lilas (extraordinary spiritual activities) of Sri Bamakhyapa, there are still innumerable wonderful events of his super-human life that are not included in these works.

Suddenly, an extreme eagerness sprang in my mind – there is definitely a need for a complete and authentic book on Tarapith and Sri Bamakhyapa. Consequently, by the infinite grace of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa, I made a solemn vow, right at that moment, to write a reference book on Tarapith and Sri Bamakhyapa which would be not only complete in all respects but also would be acceptable as authoritative work on these sacred topics.

The 34 year old immature young man who made this solemn vow on 19 December 1969, on his first arrival at Tarapith, could not even dream at that time what long-term, difficult, and vast work must be performed to fulfill this commitment. In fact, in the subsequent period extending over 25 years, he did experience, at every moment in all respects, the huge impact of this extraordinary solemn vow. As a result, little by little, piece by piece, the magnificent structure of the *Mahapith Tarapith* book was built.

That 34 year old young man is now old; but looking at the gigantic monumental work of *Mahapith Tarapith* in multiple volumes, he forgets his youth; forgets his coming old age. Only in tearful eyes, with all his heart, feels the unbounded divine grace of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa. As a matter of fact, they were his invisible companions for every moment throughout 25 years of dedicated life towards fulfillment of his great commitment.

Majestic Transformation

After making the solemn vow at noon to write the book *Mahapith Tarapith*, in the evening I was acquainted with Sadananda sadhu while he was sitting inside a ring made of more than 100 corpse skulls in his clay hut in the Tarapith maha-shmashana. With bhoga sanctified by me, he made an offering to female fox in the dark night. A white colored female fox came and accepted bhoga from my hand; incidentally, the female fox is the sacred symbol of Shakti.

According to the conditions of the challenge, in intense darkness of dead night, I was becoming ready to sit alone on that particular place in the Tarapith maha-shmashana. Experienced Sadananda Sadhu was repeatedly forbidding me from sitting at that special place; he even was trying to make me very frightened. Nevertheless, I had no choice but to sit to keep up my honour. Accordingly, I did sit on that notorious place with a strong determination – do or die.

The sky was then cloudy. The place was severely infected with poisonous snakes. In thick darkness of the dead night, the surrounding area was dreadfully silent. This was the first time I felt the frightful gravity of absolute silence of the Tarapith maha-shmashana. However, by the limitless grace of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa, gradually I could realize the super liveliness and majestic divinity of the maha-shmashana. Subsequently, after experiencing astonishing scenes, amazing sound, terrible horror, and deep surprise, suddenly, I was submerged in unlimited bliss. Accordingly, I felt a strong desire to continue meditating in that place forever.

From time immemorial, this super living Tarapith maha-shmashana has been a supreme place of sadhana for countless dedicated sadhakas. Every dust particle of this maha-shmashana bears the glorious history of sadhana for ages. The divine realization and spiritual power of innumerable sadhakas always vibrate in this super sacred maha-shmashana. This is the place of divine lila of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa.

At last, there was the end of that unforgettable grand night. By the grace of Tarama, there was no death of my physical body; instead, death arrived as amrita (immortal). Tarama gave me the taste of that amrita; nevertheless, Tarama did not allow the words of that Tantrik to become false. The man who sat in dead night on that particular place of Tarapith maha-shmashana, internally he did die for good at that night at that place. However, a new man was born from this internal death or that man was transformed forever to pursue a much greater life of uncommon spiritual purpose and distinction. In fact, maha-shmashana is not just for death, there could be also new birth or transformation.

That Tantrik sadhak was dead right – "Whoever goes there does not return."

Visiting Bakreshvar

The day after my extraordinary visit to Tarapith, on 20 December 1969, I prepared to make a trip to famous Sati pith Bakreshvar which is about 40 miles from Tarapith. But sadhak Sadananda requested me to stay back to participate with him in chakra (special Tantrik ritual) during the night. My mind was fixed for the Bakreshvar trip; so, I had to reject his request. Sadananda was a very powerful Tantrik sadhak. I heard from local people about his supernatural yogik power including power of saying infallible words. However, I did not change my mind.

My rejection of his request made egoistic Tantrik Sadananda very angry. Consequently, he started using his yogik power to destroy my trip to Bakreshvar. One after another, unnatural incidents were happening. For example, suddenly, one of my companions developed mental disturbance. Accordingly, other associates became terrified and were reluctant to go with me. However, by the grace of Tarama, all problems were resolved; even, that man with temporary mental problem became completely normal before our departure.

We arrived at Bakreshvar in the afternoon. This place is lively Sati pith with great tradition of Tantrik sadhana. Here, the sacred part between the two eyebrows of Sati fell. Many outstanding sages and sadhakas performed sadhana at this famous place and achieved siddhi.

In the evening, within the auspicious time period, I performed meditation in the Bakreshvar maha-shmashana. Here again, due to unlimited grace of Tarama on this humble son, I could fulfill my mission.

Just before departure from Bakreshvar, we were again experiencing the effect of black art performed by Sadananda sadhu. I understood that this Tantrik would not give up easily; even then, with the grace of Tarama we came back to Kolkata without any harm.

Infant Child of Tarama

To write an authentic book, I must need correct information. Accordingly, I made several trips to Tarapith and surrounding places in Birbhum district. In one of my trips, I was told that Sadananda sadhu suddenly became seriously ill; it could be fatal; so, I went to call on him. With tearful eyes, the old sadhu asked my forgiveness. He disclosed also many secret events of his life; finally, he said, "I am in very disturbed state. Please give me peace."

I replied politely, "Only Tarama has the authority to punish anybody. Unless you are peaceful there can never be any peace. Therefore, give up violence, in return Tarama will fulfill your desire. In addition, do not try to find fault with others; look for your own deficiency. Everybody is a child of Tarama. Consequently, any adverse act against Her child is really a disrespectful attack on Tarama."

In subsequent period, Sadananda sadhu became my good friend. He was a very good player of the Indian instrument Sitar. This senior Tantrik used to tell me, "I know that you are favorite child of Tarama; in reality, you are Her infant child." I do not know whether I am Her favorite child, but I am definitely Her infant child – there is no doubt in it.

During my first visit to Tarapith, I faced two great challenges. However, each time Tarama saved me. By this graceful act, Tarama showed that whoever surrenders to Her following path of truth and justice, She would always protect him, and make him ultimately victorious; no body, however powerful he may be, could even touch him. Another fact that Tarama gracefully resides in Tarapith was also revealed to me.

Not just on those two instances in Tarapith, Tarama saved me under innumerable occasions. Interestingly, I had to fight alone against very powerful and organized group of people who tried to ruin me in all respects. Even, they applied on me the black art of Tantra; but, whose life is tuned with the Supreme Protector Mother Goddess Tara, who can destroy that life? Accordingly, every time they failed and suffered miserably, and this infant child of Tarama came out as big winner.

Divinity of Tarapith

Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa are ever present gracefully in vivacious form in sacred pith Tarapith. They are watching at every moment the acts of everybody coming to Tarapith. You may be blessed or you may be totally destroyed based on your action in Tarapith. Time and again, I have the great fortune to witness this vivid fact. Without this personal realization and firm conviction, this book *Mahapith Tarapith* could not have been written.

Tarapith is the land of renunciation, not pleasure. Here, pleasure means death, and renunciation means salvation. One way it is full of bliss, but another way it is also terribly dangerous. Whoever comes here with respect, love, devotion, and act of surrendering, Tarama is most gracious and blissful to him; for these worthy children Tarapith is always a super blissful and peaceful land. On the other hand, who comes here with ill objectives of performing immoral acts and use of notorious black arts on enemies for personal gain, will be severely punished by Tarama.

Everything – people, beasts, trees, plants, roads, even dust - in this super pith Tarapith is sacred. Regarding lower species than human being, for example, dogs etc, Sri Bamakhyapa made this quite meaningful remark to Tantra-covetous Pramod Kumar Chattopadhyay, "They are children of Tarama; none of them is inferior; all are under Her·protection. Thus, nobody can remove them from here. They are actually sadhus, but have taken birth in lower species to experience karma-phal (the fruits of their deeds in past lives). They must have performed sadhana and austerity for a long time. As a result, they are allowed to stay in the Mother's land. Are you able to stay here? No, definitely not; Mother will not permit you, you have to leave."

From the above discussion, it is evident that everything in Tarapith – trees, plants, human or non-human entities – is allowed to live in Tarapith only with the approval of Tarama. They are all sacred souls; some are outwardly inferior, but inwardly higher order sadhus. Like Vrindavan, many sadhakas and sadhikas might be present here in the form of trees to cherish the divine lila of Tarama. Therefore, it is my humble request to visitors – please pay proper respect to everybody including pandas, pilgrims, trees, plants, beasts, birds, insects, etc. Do not act rude but be humble; do not pluck fruits and flowers without any reason; do not forget that the undisputed authority over Tarapith is Tarama, nobody else.

All pilgrims must remember that visiting Tarapith is a superior sadhana and religious austerity. Therefore, go there with utmost devotion and pure mind, and surrender yourself completely to the Lotus Feet of Super Goddess Tarama. In return, you are sure to receive Her infinite grace and compassion.

Preface by Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay

Collection of Information and Utility of *Mahapith Tarapith*

My sincere prayer to Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa is that before visiting Tarapith, people should have some authentic information about the mythological, historical, and spiritual tradition of this sacred Sati pith, infinite lila of Tarama, glorious life of Sri Bamakhyapa, and inspiring events of many great sages and saints of Tarapith. This will help to ignite sacred fire of love and respect, devotion and refuge, and finally desire of renunciation in the mind of people. These are actually prerequisites for receiving grace and compassion of Tarama.

Thus, there is a great need of the age for an authentic and also inspiring book on Tarapith. In response to my honest prayer, for fulfillment of this need of the society of modern age, gracious Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa have composed this majestic book *Mahapith Tarapith* in multiple volumes. Use of my name as author is incidental; indeed, it is just a matter of their great grace on this humble child.

For a long period of 16 years, Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa provided innumerable information in unnatural way. Some examples are: Collection of huge authoritative history of super sacred Sati pith Tarapith; gathering of countless facts on vast spectacular life of Sri Bamakhyapa; almost in supernatural way, meeting with many saints and sages, some of them even more than few hundred years old. I was fortunate to receive information from different parts of India and different countries. For example, information on Tara-tattva from Nepal, Tibbet, Mongolia, China – these are just few convincing evidences of grace of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa in creation of the *Mahapith Tarapith*.

Before the composition of this *Mahapith Tarapith*, priceless history of ancient pith Tarapith, secret historical tradition of Tara sadhana, uncommon facts on glorious sadhana and siddhi of countless sages and saints associated with siddha pith Tarapith, were submerged in the abyss of oblivion. In response to my honest prayer and endeavor for a long period of time, Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa have reclaimed these spiritual and historical jewels. This is an act of their unlimited grace for the devotees of modern age. Accordingly, I recollect this sacred fact with tearful eyes.

Great Liberation

I have discussed before the unlimited grace of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa. In addition to grace, I have also received great compassion of Tarama. These two forces – grace and great compassion – have built the foundation of my spiritual life and also my acting as an author. This great compassion is a rare event. In fact, only a very few fortunate people, one out of many millions, might receive this great compassion.

Tritapa (three afflictions) affect all humans. These three afflictions are caused by – adhyatmika (spiritual), adhibhowtika (material), and adhidaivika (supernatural). Supreme Goddess Tarama removes these three afflictions. For this reason, She is called Tritapaharini (remover of tritapa). Normally, She removes these afflictions for jiva through many lives; but in some rare cases, for extremely fortunate jiva, She destroys tritapa in just one birth. Since She destroys tritapa, She is also called Tritapanashini (destroyer of tritapa).

This destruction of tritapa is a very mysterious process. Tarama allows jiva to suffer by tritapa, but at the same time, with Her great compassion, by burning the afflictions in the fire-pit world, She destroys moha (deep attachment to earthly pleasures and luxury) of jiva to make him free or liberated; it is like destroying sufferings or moha through purifying process of afflictions.

In 1970, Tarama took away my most beloved person – my mother. She returned to the lap of eternal Tarama. In subsequent period of 7 years, gracious Tarama showed me the real nature of the selfish world by keeping me in very distressful conditions.

In 1977, my last support, my father, also returned to the ever peaceful land of heaven. Again, for a long period of 7 years, Tarama kept me in the terrible fire of meanness of the world. At the same time, I suffered terribly from spiritual, material, supernatural, physical, mental, economical, and family troubles. Year after year, these unbearable tough tests of afflictions were continuing for 14 years. In this long purifying process, Tarama showed me again and again the ugly state of the world. Within and also outside of family – selfishness, meanness, and hypocrisy of everybody were revealed to me.

In spite of these terrible sufferings for 14 years, I had never lost, even for a moment, my faith or dependence on Tarama. My surrender to Her is absolute, does not depend on worldly business relationship. Finally, through fiery afflictions of 14 years, Tarama destroyed permanently my moha by revealing the most notorious real nature of the world. In my case, this process of moha-mukti (destruction of moha) or great liberation was accomplished in this life. As I have explained before, only through the great compassion of Tarama, this moha-mukti can happen in one life. Consequently, I am indeed very fortunate to receive Her great compassion.

My moha-mukti by Tarama was necessary to gain the real experience of life. It was like a spiritual austerity in adverse circumstances for the preparation of the *Mahapith Tarapith*. How can I talk about moha-mukti, devotion, and absolute surrender unless I do not have any personal experience? Thus, 14 year's afflictions were a blessing in disguise. I received Her great compassion and became worthy in pursuing my main goal of life – composition of the *Mahapith Tarapith*.

Tarama is our eternal Mother. Our biological mothers are changed from birth to birth, but Tarama is forever. She is always by the side of Her children. She never forgets, but we forget Her by submitting to the cheap earthly pleasure or illusion of the world. She is always ready to receive us, but we do not make any effort to receive Her.

Thus, in this perishable, false, and full of suffering world we must hold our eternal Mother Tarama with all sincerity, love, devotion, and absolute surrending attitude. In return, She will certainly show Her great compassion by granting moha-mukti (dispelling illusion) for great liberation.

History of Composition and Contents of *Mahapith Tarapith*

I had dedicated the *Mahapith Tarapith* Volume 1 to Pramod Kumar Chattopadhyay who was a blessed child of Tarama and who had also the fortune to be acquainted with Sri Bamakhyapa. At the old age of 90 years, he drew the cover page of Bengali edition of this book. I am really delighted to note that the same cover page finds a central place in the cover page of the English edition.

In "Acknowledgements", I have acknowledged with deep respect the contribution of many noble people in composition of the

Mahapith Tarapith. In "Selected References", I have listed major publications used as information resources.

I started collecting information for the *Mahapith Tarapith* from 19 December 1969. Actual composition of the book was commenced from 4 may 1971. The first volume was completed on 24 February 1974; incidentally, this 24 February is very memorable as the arrival date of Shiva Avatara Sri Bamakhyapa. Fourth volume was completed on 31 December 1984. The fifth or final volume was published on 10 August 1993.

Following is the general idea of contents of the five volumes of the *Mahapith Tarapith:*

- First volume – History of Tarapith from ancient age (creation of universe) to early part of middle age (divine lila in early life of Sri Bamakhyapa).
- Second volume – History of Tarapith for middle age (divine lila in middle life of Sri Bamakhyapa).
- Third volume – Divine lila in end life of Sri Bamakhyapa and also life history of contemporary sadhakas and sadhikas.
- Fourth volume – Final lila of Sri Bamakhyapa.
- Fifth volume – Modern period of Tarapith and also history of many sadhakas and sadhikas after Sri Bamakhyapa.

I started collecting information on the vast life of Sri Bamakhyapa in 1969. By then, he already gave up his mortal body for more than 58 years ago. Still, by the infinite grace of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa, I could collect many spectacular and supernatural events of Sri Bamakhyapa from innumerable siddha sadhakas and sadhikas. I respectfully recollect their priceless contribution.

I collected some astonishing facts which are beyond imagination. For example, historical association with Sri Bamakhyapa of the following great personalities: Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramdas Kathiababa from Vrindavan, Sri Sambhu Giri Maharaj, Sri Vishudhvananda Maharaj, 250 years old Sri Madhavananda Giri, etc. In addition, majestic and supernatural life histories of Baherababa, Bhairavima, Aghoribaba, Anandamayima, Radhama, etc. are also included.

Also, I was able to add many events of supreme historical importance. For example, majestic history of subtle-level communication between Sri Ramkrishna and Sri Bamakhyapa, visit of Devendranath Thakur and inspiration from Sri Bamakhyapa to set up Shantiniketan, visit of Sir Ashutosh Mukhopadhyay and receiving grace from Sri Bamakhyapa, meeting of poet Ravindranath Thakur with Sri Bamakhyapa, etc.

A collection of rare photographs of many sadhakas and sadhikas and analysis of birth chart of Sri Bamakhyapa are outstanding features of the *Mahapith Tarapith* book.

Conclusion

At the end, for countless times, I touch Feet of real creators of the *Mahapith Tarapith* - Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa. Their divine grace will remain as the most precious gift in my life.

This gigantic spiritual work, *Mahapith Tarapith,* has been created to inspire people of the age for surrendering to the Supreme Goddess Tarama to receive Her grace, and finally achieve the most important goal of life – liberation.

There is no end of lila of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa. It is eternal. It did happen in the past, it is happening now, and it will definitely happen in future - forever, from age to age.

It is my earnest prayer to our eternal Mother Goddess Tara – let inner world of people be illuminated with the divine grace of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa. Let them rise from petty jivattva to godly Shivattva. In this supreme journey, let them finally unite with their ever-blissful and ever-own form of eternity.

My entire life has been dedicated in spreading the glory of Tarama and Sri Bamakhyapa in India and abroad. In pursuance of this divine mission, under my direction, my disciple Dipak Bhattacharya has translated the *Mahapith Tarapith Volume 1* from Bengali to English. However, we must not forget that Tarama is the real writer. We are just acting on Her behalf as selected obedient servants. Only with Her anugraha (grace) we can carry Her divine flag as long as She wants.

Jay Ma Tara Jay Bam

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December 2009

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by

Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay

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INTRODUCTION

by

Dipak Bhattacharya

Concept of God in Hinduism

The earliest statement of oneness of God comes from the *Rig Veda*, usually dated around 1500 BCE or earlier. The *Rig Veda* 1.164.46 states , "*Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*" (Truth is one and the sages call it by different names). Fundamental oneness is always the cornerstone of Indian religion. However, calling God by different names is also recognized. In our daily life we can notice that one person is given different names by different people. A man can be father to his children, husband to his wife, son to his father, and grandfather to his grandchildren. By calling a man by different names does not change the true identity of the man. Similarly, God can be known by different names based on how people relate with God. One may worship God as a mother, a child, a father or a friend.

Hindu doctrine recognizes that the Ultimate Reality possesses infinite potential, power and intelligence, and therefore cannot be limited by a single name or form. Thus, Hindus view the Ultimate Reality as having two aspects: impersonal and personal. The impersonal aspect of the Ultimate Reality is called Nirguna Brahman in Hindu scriptures. Nirguna Brahman has no attributes and, as such, is not an object of prayer, but of meditation and knowledge. This aspect of the Ultimate Reality is beyond conception, beyond reasoning, and beyond thought.

The personal aspect of the Ultimate Reality is known as

Saguna Brahman, called Ishvara and it is Brahman with attributes. Saguna Brahman cannot be limited by one form and is therefore worshipped by Hindus in male, female, and even neuter form. Ishvara is also worshipped as father, mother, and friend.

Whether this ultimate reality is itself finally without distinguishing attributes (Nirguna Brahman) or with personal attributes (Saguna Brahman) has been a subject of extensive debate among Hindu scholars. Nirguna Brahman must transcend (exist above and beyond) all limiting attributes, such as name, gender, form, and features. But how can the human mind, with its limitations, conceive of this transcendent reality? Human comprehension requires a more personal reality, with attributes. Thus, at least at the beginning of one's spiritual journey, personal God is almost indispensable. As the sadhak makes progress, difference between personal and impersonal God gradually diminishes, and finally disappears.

One very important form of Saguna Brahman or Ishvara, widely worshiped by all Hindus, is Mother Goddess or Shakti, the female or power aspect of divinity.

Mother Goddess or Shakti

Devi, the Divine Female, as is revered as a Mother, is better and universally known as the Mother Goddess. Reverence for 'mother' is inherent in any one born, a beast or a man. The first man, it seems, while contemplating the idea of the unseen Divine, looked at the face of the mother, and found in her the ultimate 'divinity' and the manifest form of the unseen Divine.

This Mother Goddess is the supreme Divinity for the Tantriks and is worshipped in different form as Durga, Kali, Tara, etc.

Devotees have discovered in Her oceans of mercy. In bad time or good time, She is always the same protective, caring, loving Mother with a gracious face and a blessing hand.

The great merit of worshipping Mother Goddess is all-comprehensiveness. The milk of compassion of Jagadamba (Universal Mother Goddess) flows perpetually and equally to every one of Her children. She provides easier method for Her weak and short-lived children of Kali Yuga. There is no discrimination for caste, gender, and nationality. All are equally taken care of, and, for all, the path has been made smooth and straight.

In our sacred scripture *Chandi*, (Third Episode, Fifth Chapter, and Verses 71 – 73), it is said:

"*Ya devi sarvabhuteshu matrirupena samsthita;*
Namas tasyai namas tasyai namas tasyai namo namah"

–"To the Goddess who in all being abides in the form of Mother, to her salutations, to her salutations, to her salutations, salutations, salutations."

Mother Goddess Tara

Mother Goddess Tara is second (after Kali) of Dasha Mahavidyas (Ten great Wisdom Goddesses) or ten personalities of Jagadamba (Mother Goddess of Universe).

Sanskrit word "Tara" comes from the root "tri", to traverse. It is used to denote one who crosses, tarati, and makes other cross as well, tarayati. Tara or Taraka denotes a star as it traverses in space and acts as guiding light. It is also an appellation for the guiding light in the human eye, the pupil, because of which the eye is justly called nayana or netra, that which leads. A boat is called tari, as it makes one cross the water. Mother Tara is Bhava-Tarini – ferrying across the ocean of temporary existence in this world, the samsara.

If we study the spiritual tradition of the ages, we find that Goddess Tara has been invoked in connection with the acquisition of knowledge, with the attainment of a potent power of speech, with the dramatic display of feats of learning. The force whose sound-symbol is AUM is the great Goddess Tara.

Ignorance is the greatest of all troubles for man. Tara grants the ultimate knowledge which roots out all ignorance and ferries the aspirants from non-being to being, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.

A special kind of worship is prescribed in the case of Tara, which is known as Mahachinachara. The ultimate aim of worship is to become same as the deity. In that case, where is the question of purity or bath etc.? In this world created by God, everything is auspicious. There is nothing like an inauspicious moment. Auspicious is the moment when the thought of God arises. So in the worship of such a deity, there is no regulation regarding time and place, no restriction regarding posture etc. There is no prescribed form of japa or prayer. This is the doctrine of Mahachinachara. What a simple mode of worship!

Tara is maya as well as Mahamaya. As maya, she binds (allows earthly enjoyment); as Mahamaya she liberates (destroys the attachments to earthly enjoyments). Tara worshipper (sadhak) knows these dual aspects, and therefore, he takes shelter in Her lap and in course of spiritual progress ultimately finds place in Her Lotus Feet and thus becomes same as Mother, the source from which he was born, and there is the end of cycle of births and rebirths – liberation.

Great Tara sadhak and composer Kamalakanta has said:

"*Majlo amar man bhramara shyama pada neel kamale*" –

"The black bee of my mind is drawn to the Blue Lotus Feet of Mother Shyama or Tara."

Like sadhak Kamalakanta, let us take refuge at the divine Lotus Feet of Mother Tara.

In this context, it is mentionable:

"*Kali tara mahavidya mahasiddhi pradayini;*
Mahavidyasu sarvasu kalou siddhirnuttama."
– (*Tararahasyam*)

"In Kali yuga, Mother Kali and Mother Tara – these two Mahavidyas can certainly provide all siddhis."

The Book *Mahapith Tarapith*

Study of scriptures is essential in understanding the theory and practice of religion. But this can not easily inspire us; this can not instill an unshakable confidence for the spiritual journey. We may come across with doubts – is it possible to attain the siddhi or ultimate spiritual goal? Answer is definite yes in accordance with our Indian tradition. But still doubt may persist as we may look for the concrete proof of siddhi. As proof of the pudding is in the eating, examples of super saints like Sri Bamakhyapa and Sri Ramkrishna, who attained siddhi in their lifetimes, can provide that solid proof of siddhi - no further proof is necessary.

This book, *Mahapith Tarapith* is full of remarkable activities of Sri Bamakhyapa, the greatest Tara sadhak of Tarapith in Kali yuga. His illustrious life is a constant reminder of the highest standard of Indian austerities. Study of this book will provide that much needed motivation and confidence to become at least spiritual, essential starting point for a possible attainment of final goal of siddhi in future.

The classic *Mahapith Tarapith* in five volumes, is magnum opus of Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay. This is an authentic, historical, spiritual, and biographical book. Volume 1 of this book is composed of three parts:

- Part 1: Early Ages – includes cosmology, Dasha Mahavidyas, Taratattva, description and spiritual significance of 51 Satipithas, and history of Tarapith up to establishment of first temple.
- Part 2: Middle Ages; Early Period - includes puja and festivals in Tarapith, history of devotees servicing Tarama, Maha-shmashana, Dvaraka River, Maha Shveta-Shimul tree, Sripadapadma of Tarama, Jivitakunda, and story of many memorable siddha sadhakas including immortal composer Kamalakanta.
- Part 3: Purushottama Sri Sri Bamakhyapa (Early Activities).

By far, the most extensive and authentic book on Tarapith and Sri Bamakhyapa is the *Mahapith Tarapith.* This book is full of historical facts of unparallel dimensions. Therefore, rightfully, it has earned the recognition as "encyclopedia" of the holy Tarapith and Saint Sri Bamakhyapa.

The *Mahapith Tarapith* is originally written in Bengali language for a period of 25 years by Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay, who is not only a famous writer, but also a celebrated Tara sadhak, spiritual child of Tarama. When a Spiritual Master writes, his writing, soaked with the essence of divinity, with grace and direct assistance from God, exceeds by far the limited boundary of common writer. It becomes an expression of divine realization, not just a product of dry bookish knowledge. Therefore, it becomes authoritative almost like works of Indian sages.

English Translation of the *Mahapith Tarapith*

Understanding religious works of different faiths generates respect, tolerance, peace, and of course enrich knowledge. However, language can be a big obstacle in this effort. As the *Mahapith Tarapith* was written in Bengali language, it is not possible for many to enjoy it. To remove this limitation, under the direction and blessing of my highly revered Guru Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay, I have made a humble attempt to translate volume 1 of the *Mahapith Tarapith* into English.

An excellent discussion on the birth chart of Sri Bamakhyapa is a precious element of this book. For the benefit of readers, I have added a short discussion "Indian Predictive Astrology" as Appendix 1.

We are children of the same Divine Mother - all are members of same family. Thus, in spite of different religions, races, and countries we can still connect ourselves to our true universality. Tarama is not just the mother of Hindus; She represents the Universal Divine Mother Goddess, the eternal Mother of all. Therefore, this book is for all spiritual minded children of the universe. So, please seek for yourself the divine truth concealed in the book, and by the grace of Tarama you may find it.

It needs just one spark to ignite the whole forest. May glowing spirit of this book provide that initial spark for the sincere seekers in the auspicious beginning of a sacred journey in the spiritual path!

Sri Durga Jay Tara

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December, 2009

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by

Dipak Bhattacharya

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Dr. Amitava Sanyal

MAHAPITH TARAPITH

PART 1

EARLY AGES

1.1 Cosmology (Srishti Tattva)

Concept of Brahman (Absolute)

Brahman is like the poet, the universe is like the poem.
Brahman is like the artist, the universe is like the painting.
Brahman is like the ocean, the universe is like the wave.

Why does the poet create the poem?
Why does the artist paint the painting?
Why does the ocean make waves?

Is it due to a wish to create? No! The poet is perfect; He can not have any more wish to fulfill. Is it then due to a want? No! Only imperfect can have a want; The perfect has no want. Is it then due to desire? No! Desire comes from want, and since the perfect does not have any want, He can not have any desire.

The perfect poet has no wish, no want, and not even desire. Then, how is it possible for the first perfect poet to create poem? The answer is – the wish is always there but in an invisible or hidden form. In creation of the poem the wish of the perfect was just transformed from invisible to visible – from un-manifest to manifest. Thus, Brahman is the poet or the artist or the ocean; and the poem or painting or wave is just His manifested form. The universe is only a manifestation. Thus, un-manifested Brahman becomes the manifested universe. Therefore, Brahman is the universe, and the universe is the Brahman; it is only two forms of the same Brahman.

Who is Brahman?

It is He Who is responsible for creation (srishti) of jiva (living beings), Who controls preservation (sthiti) of jiva, and with Whom jiva is united at the destined time of dissolution (laya). Thus, Brahman is "*Ekamevadvitiyam*" – "He is the one without equal – unique."

"Strive for that from where all living beings are born, where they live after being born, and where they ultimately dissolve. That is Brahman." – [*Taittiriya Upanishad* 3.1].

What is the Form of Brahman?

When Brahman is un-manifested, He is formless (nirakara) or without any form. Here, He is without any attribute (nirguna) i.e. beyond of three attributes – sattva, rajas, and tamas. Three parts of Brahma are un-manifested. Only one part is manifested with attribute (saguna) or with form (sakara).

What is the True Nature of Brahman?

This nirguna, nirakara, un-manifested, and imperishable Brahman is without any beginning (anadi), is self-born (svayambhu), is boundless (asima), is infinite (ananta), and sachchidananda (threefold sat-chit-ananda). He is beyond three gunas; beyond comprehension through knowledge; beyond perception with mind; beyond description by words; beyond comprehension by thoughts; unknown to everybody; atma (soul) and immobile.

Nobody knows the beginning of Brahman; He is without any beginning (anadi); Nobody has created Him; He is self-born (svayambhu); He has no limit; He is unlimited (asima); Nobody can find His end; He is endless (ananta).

He is "sachchidananda" – expression of sat (Truth or

Existence), chit (knowledge or consciousness), and ananda (bliss).

He is sat – eternal. He always existed in past, He exists right now, and He will always exist in future. He does not perish – He is imperishable. He is chit – ever shining by Himself. He is ananda – "a" means infinite, and "nanda" means bliss; so, He is infinite bliss. Therefore, Brahman is called "sachchidananda".

He is gunatita (beyond three gunas – sattva, rajas, and tamas). He is jnanatita (beyond all knowledge). He is manatita (beyond perception with the mind). He is vakyatita (beyond words). He is bhavatita (beyond comprehension by thought). Since He is beyond knowledge, mind, word, and thought, nobody could describe or disclose His real nature – He thus remains as unknown to everybody – He is "*Avang manasogocharam*" – "Unknowable through word and mind."

It is He, Who is consciousness in the form of atma (soul) – that is why He is atma. Because He is everywhere as atma, He is perfect; and it is because He is perfect, He is immobile; Because of His immobility He can not move. He resides in the whole universe – He has no other place to go. In reality, He is the material cause of His universe. He is manifested, and also un-manifested. There is only Him and nobody else – thus, He is "*Ekamevadvitiyam*"- He is the one without equal – unique.

We know that this universe is the manifestation of Brahman – but how did this manifestation happen? This had happened from the word. That un-manifested Brahman became manifested through word. Without the word there can not be any manifestation. From the word "*Tadaikshata – vahu syam prajayeyeti*" [*Chhandogya Upanishad* – 6/2/3] – That Unique Brahman mentally wished - "Let me be many, let me be born as many" – the entire universe was manifested. So, the word is the first manifestation of the mental wish of Brahman; the word (shabda) is called "Shabda-Brahman."

The sum total of this Shabda-Brahman is the endless collection of words. This endless collection of words is Veda. Veda, the infinite power of word, is thus the outcome of un-manifested thought of Brahman. Nobody has created Veda. Veda is expired, and not inspired. Veda is also intangible. Another name of Veda is thus "shruti" (revelation). This wave of word is in the beginning of creation of the universe, and the same wave of word is also at the beginning of creation of jiva (living being). Like microbe the wave of word also has the source of wave. Thus, no thought is possible without word. Word is thus eternal. This ever initiated collection of words has been working for ages. It is the word which is truth. Thus, Veda is pure and true word. The collection of words of Veda is forever. The great universe had been created from this eternally true collection of words; and with the help of its most secret nature, there will be again a new creation after the deep sleep of the dissolution.

The word has four phases – para (avyakta or inaudible), pashyanti and madhyama (audible only by yogis), and vaikhari (common audible sound). The Bible also admits that before creation there was word – "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God" – St. John- 1:1.2.

Veda is truth. It is truth which is knowledge. Thus, Veda is knowledge. Since this knowledge is endless, Veda is also endless. Brahman is manifested as the universe i.e. it becomes the material cause of the world. "Let me be many" – due to this wish, Brahman has become both material and efficient cause of the world [*Brahma Sutra*].

Shankaracharya said "Brahman must be understood as both the material and efficient cause of the world. Only the efficient cause of the world must not be understood." [Commentary of Shankaracharya on verse I.iv.23 of *Brahma Sutra*].

After words, came names (nama) and forms (rupa). These names and forms are like waves of the endless ocean of Brahman. Waves are identical to the ocean, but it appears that waves and the ocean are different. But, real nature of both is water – that is the same. Even then, they look different because of these names and forms. In reality, both waves and ocean are identical.

When waves dissolve in the ocean, the names and forms of the waves also dissolve in the ocean. This name and form is the maya. Actually, they are the same. Thus,

> "*Nama rupayonimvahita shadantara tad brahman tadsmritam*" – [*Upanishad*]
>
> – "Brahman has concealed Himself through nama-rupa. Brahman is different from nama-rupa; He is amrita (nectar)".

Therefore, Brahman is that ocean and His great worlds are different waves. They are really same but only due to maya they appear to be different; because Brahman is '*Ekamevadvitiyam*' – unique. That One word has become many through nama and rupa. He has become saguna (with attributes) from nirguna (without attributes), and sakara (with form) from nirakara (without form).

When nirguna Brahman had become saguna Brahman, He had manifested Himself first in two forms. A divine and luminous man was created from the golden and radiating right side of His body; and a divine and luminous woman was created from His left side of the body. These two forms of saguna Brahman are respectively 'Parama-Purusha' and 'Parama-Prakriti'.

Definition and Nature of Ishvara

Parama-Purusha of saguna Brahman is known as 'Ishvara'. Ishvara is described in *Brahma Sutra* [1.1.2] as "*Janmadi asya yatah*" – "That is Ishvara from which the birth, continuance, and dissolution are derived."

What is the Nature of Ishvara?

This is described in The *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali [1.24 – 1.27]: "Ishvara is the Supreme Purusha, unaffected by any afflictions, actions, fruits of actions or by any inner impressions of desires." – [1.24]. "In Him is the complete manifestation of the seed of omniscience." – [1.25]. "Unconditioned by time, He is the guru of even the most ancient gurus." – [1.26]. "The word expressive of Ishvara is the mystic sound AUM." – [1.27].

How Can We Describe Radiance of Ishvara?

> In the *Geeta* [11.12], radiance of Ishvara is described as –
>
> "*Divi suryasahasrasya bhavet yugapadutthita,*
> *yadi bhah sadrishi sa syat bhasastasya mahatmanah*"
>
> – "If the splendour of a thousand Suns were to rise up simultaneously in the sky, it would be like the splendour of that mighty Being."

Saguna Brahman is sat, chit, and ananda. He is the concrete form of sachchidananda. Shruti said – "It is the sachchidananda Who is manifested in this world." Thus, saguna Brahman is Ishvara. He is at the same time eternal, truth, manifested, full of knowledge, full of joy, and full of charm idol. Also, Ishvara is an indescribably loving person [*Shandilya Sutra*]. In Upanishad there is explanation of knowledge (vidya) of both saguna and nirguna Brahman.

Thus, along with infinite majesty of Ishvara there is also infinite sweetness. What is sweetness? Realizing Ishvara as the dearest person when a devotee cherishes nectar of Ishvara through love and devotion – that nectar is called 'sweetness'.

In this way Vyasa, Patanjali, Shankara, Ramanuja and other monists, dualists, and qualified monists had praised the infinite power of Ishvara.

What is Bhakti (Devotion)?

Shankaracharya in his commentary of the *Brahma Sutra* [4.1.1] described devotion as – "Wife is in a deep thinking mood about her beloved husband who lives in abroad. Her whole mind is completely filled with the uninterrupted, continuous flow of husband's memory. This is devotion."

Since the universal guru Shankaracharya, the great wise, great vedantik, and incarnation (avatara) of Lord Shiva, had made himself this superb interpretation of devotion, it is understood that basis of devotion is knowledge. This knowledge based devotion is called 'supreme devotion' (parabhakti).

Creation Cycle

Almighty, infinitely majestic, and supremely charming Ishvara is the creator, preserver, and destroyer. These principal cosmic functions go on from kalpa after kalpa – endlessly forever. What is kalpa? According to eternal, pure, and true Veda this grand creation of

Ishvara from start to finish i.e. from creation, preservation, and to dissolution – there is a destined time cycle in a perfectly chronological order – this is what is called kalpa.

After creation comes dissolution; and after dissolution comes creation; this creation cycle is controlled by Veda and preserved by Ishvara. After one cycle of creation-preservation-dissolution, self-born (svayambhu) Ishvara appears again as Veda. Then, according to destined time cycle Ishvara manifests Himself in the form of the world. The seasons – summer, the rainy season, autumn, hemanta (season occurring between autumn and winter), winter, and spring – come and go every year; in the same way, Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali – these four yugas, come and go in every 'daiva-yuga'. Duration of this daiva-yuga is 4,32,000 human years. Seventy-one daiva-yugas makes one 'manvantara'; and fourteen manvantaras make one kalpa. In accordance with Veda, name of our present kalpa is 'shveta varaha kalpa'.

These kinds of many kalpas are perfectly destined in the biggest and greatest mahayuga chakra (grand cycle) of the boundless, endless, and infinite cycle of time. Ishvara Himself is the creator of this mahayuga chakra. Thus, "Nobody else can get the power of creation-preservation-and dissolution. This power belongs only to Ishvara." [*Brahma Sutra*].

Creation of the Worlds

Saguna Brahman is Lord Narayana.

" *Akashat patitam toyam yatha gachhati sagaram,*
sarvadeva namaskarah keshavam prati gachhati."
– [*Mahabharata*]

– "As all water falling from the sky goes to the ocean through different paths, whatever prayer is made to any God it goes to Lord Keshava or to the Lotus Feet of Sri Sri Narayana."

His Para-Shakti (power aspect of God) is Parama-Prakriti Narayani. This Brahma-Shakti is identical to Brahman; but because of need of this world manifested as two forms. Goddess Narayani holds the personifying consciousness power of Narayana.

This divine action of consciousness created the third form of Brahman – "Kutastha-Chaitanya" or Supreme Consciousness. This Kutastha-Chaitanya consisting of three qualities (gunas) became the cause of three primary creations; thus, there were creations of – rajasika Lord Brahma who is responsible for creation of the world, sattvika Lord Vishnu who is responsible for preservation of the world, and tamasika Lord Maheshvara who is responsible for dissolution of the world. As Shakti or power of these Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara there were also creations of Brahmani, Lakshmi, and Maheshvari respectively.

By these powers of Kutastha-Chaitanya there were creations, one by one, of the following gods and others: Yama, Mrityu, Soma, Aditya, Varuna, Rudra, Parjanyadeva; seven lokas – Bhuloka, Pitriloka, Devaloka, Tapaloka, Janaloka, Mahaloka, and Hiranyaloka; fourteen Bhuvanas; endless atmospheres, planets and stars, five physical objects (pancha-bhutas), the whole worlds, rishis (sages), gods, asuras (demons), human beings, yakshas, rakshas, gandhvarvas, kinnaras, etc; and other lower order species.

The self-consciousness (jiva-chaitanya) had originated from the consciousness aspect of the Kutastha-Chaitanya. In reality, one Brahman has four forms: nirguna Brahman, saguna Brahman, Kutastha-Chaitanya, and jiva-chaitanya. That Kutastha-Chaitanya or Supreme Consciousness is the Brahman.

Brahman has become many from one due to the purpose of creation. The purpose of this creation is diversity of His sporting activity or lila. He is one and perfect; but as one and perfect, none can enjoy oneself. Enjoyment is possible by one only when one becomes many; if perfect forgets His real nature because of maya, only then He can cherish. Thus, Brahman has become many for enjoyment and diversity of lila – nirguna Brahman has become saguna Brahman, and Kutastha-Chaitanya has become jiva-chaitanya. Therefore, Brahman ends in jiva (self), and again jiva ends in Brahman. Thus said in *Brahma Sutra*:

> "*Jiva brahmaiva bhavati*" – "Jiva (self) is Brahman".
>
> Therefore, in *Chhandogya Upanishad* [6.13.3], it is said –
>
> *"Sa ya eshohanimaitadatmyamidam sarva tat satyam sa atma;*
> *Tat-tvam-asi shvetaketu."*
>
> – "That which is the finest essence – this whole world has that as its self. That is reality. That is atma. That art thou – Shvetaketu."

Nature and Effect of Maya

Brahman becomes jiva by disguising Him with His power of maya in the form of nama-rupa. He has done this for His enjoyment and diversity of lila. Because He is perfect, He is full of knowledge. Without the help of maya of nama-rupa He can not forget His real nature; and without forgetting the real nature no enjoyment is possible.

Thus, Paramatma (Supreme Soul) Brahman becomes jivatma (soul of living being). Brahma-Ocean becomes waves by maya of nama-rupa. Lila of ocean and waves is full of diversity. Whenever jivatma wave will unite with its Antaratma or Paramatma Brahma-Ocean by removing the maya of nama-rupa, it will regain its true and eternal nature of Brahman. Thus, from the endless, brilliant, and glorious Supreme Soul, jivas i.e. jivatmas are flowing out in a continuous stream; and after completion of triple natured karma jivas unite again with that Brahman.

It is this power of maya of Brahman that keeps jivatma separated from its true nature. That is why it is said that "Brahman ends in jiva, and jiva ends in Brahman." In monist *Vedanta* – "*Eka brahman dvitiya nasti.*" – "There is nothing else other than Brahman." But in Dualism, jiva is eternal part or servant of Ishvara. Thus, jiva can not be liberated without Ishvara.

What is Maya?

Maya is that power which prevents jiva from realizing his true nature; restricts jiva to follow the path of perfection in life; and induces in jiva thoughts of eternity in transient materialistic objects. That is the state of worldly nature.

Brahma-Chaitanya (supreme consciousness), forgetting its true nature because of maya, becomes jiva-chaitanya (self-consciousness), and cherishes the diversity of creative lila through triple natured creation-preservation-dissolution. Thus, maya is very clearly specified as Nature.

> *"Mayam tu prakritim vidyatmayinam tu maheshvaram"* – [*Shvetashvatara Upanishad*, 4.10]

– " Know that Nature is maya and the controller of maya (Mayi) is the Great Lord or Brahman."

Vedanta is very conscious about this maya. Mayavada of Vedanta is therefore especially famous. According to Vedanta, jiva has to perform his duty in patience along with this maya Nature. Only then, jiva can regain his real nature or return to Brahma-Chaitanya – can return to the glory of true identity from darkness of illusion – can reach to eternal from temporary materialistic life.

Why maya is described as Nature and Mayi as Maheshvara? – "This maya is world Nature. With the help of Mayi or Purusha, it is this Nature which controls the world as ever." – [*Sankhyayoga*].

Sri Aurobindo said in *"Essays on the Geeta"* [pages 65 – 66]:

"Purusha, the inactive, Prakriti, the active....Prakriti is Energy and its process. Purusha does nothing, but it reflects the action of Energy and its process; Prakriti is mechanical, but by being reflected in Purusha it assumes the appearance of consciousness in its activities, and thus there are created those phenomena of creation, conservation, dissolution, birth and life and death, happiness and suffering which the Purusha under the influence of Prakriti attributes to itself although they belong not at all to itself but to the action or movement of Prakriti alone. .....This continues so long as the Purusha consents to reflect the disturbance which obscures his eternal nature and attribute to it the nature of Prakriti; but when he withdraws his consent, the Gunas fall into equilibrium and the soul returns to its eternal, unchanging immobility."

This is the "Purusha Prakriti Tattva (theory)" of Sage Kapila. Thus, maya of *Vedanta* is same as mula (primary) Prakriti of *Sankhya*;

and these Prakriti and Purusha are the fundamental elements of the creation. In the *Geeta*, this Purusha is 'Para-Prakriti' and this Prakriti is 'Apara-Prakriti'. However, Purushottama Sri Krishna in the *Geeta*, unlike Purusha of *Sankhya*, is not bound by the 'Apara-Prakriti'. Thus, sage Patanjali discussed the liberation of the soul by the union of jivatma (soul) with Paramatma (Supreme Soul) Sri Krishna through eightfold Yoga without considering 'Apara-Prakriti'.

This 'Prakriti' gives birth to sattva-rajas-tamas (three gunas) i.e. creation-preservation-dissolution. This Prakriti through twenty-four tattvas creates, preserves, and destroys the world. That is why Purushottama Sri Krishna said in the *Geeta* [15.7] –

> *"Mamaivamso jivaloke jivabhutah sanatanah;*
> *Manahashashthani indriyani prakritisthani karshati"*
>
> – "An eternal part of myself alone has become the jiva in the world of living being. It pulls the senses together with mind as the sixth that are set in Prakriti."

Prakriti is fundamentally evolutionary; thus, outwardly and inwardly producer of materialistic world, and everything else - life and death, pleasure and suffering, etc. is the product of evolution. Therefore, even being part of Supreme Soul, because of impurity caused by maya, individual soul is bounded by all materialistic activities like life and death, pleasure and suffering. As a result of this worldly enjoyment, jiva forgets his true nature.

Many people following the materialistic idea of Charvak, considering this transient world as eternal and pleasure through five senses as really pleasant engage themselves in the temporary worldly enjoyment. In consequence of this, prakriti compels them again and again to follow cycles of birth and death.

Liberation or Salvation (Mukti)

How can we liberate ourselves from the clutch of this maya-Prakriti? It can be done in three main ways:

- First: ignoring maya by gaining self-realization through jnana (knowledge) or Yoga.
- Second: surrendering to maya Prakriti, gain liberation by the grace of Shakti i.e. receiving the key of liberation directly from Mahamaya (Shakti or Prakriti). Liberation can be obtained very quickly through worshipping Shakti. This worshipping of Shakti has to be performed according to Tantrik spiritual practice (sadhana). Starting from lowest level of sadhana, pashvachara (tamasika), sadhak (spiritual practitioner) elevates himself to virachara (rajasika). With further progress in the sadhana, sadhak goes from virachara to the highest level of spiritual level, divyachara (sattvika), to gain final goal of liberation. Thus, there is the graded transformation from the lower level jivattva (worldly human nature) to the highest level Shivattva (purely divine nature).
- Third: liberation in slow steps through complete dedication and surrender (bhakti) to God. This is the easiest method for the common people.

Thus, liberation can be obtained by jiva in any of the four ways – jnana, yoga, karma, and bhakti.

Supreme Mother Goddess Shakti

Maya of the *Vedanta*, Prakriti of the *Sankhya*, Apara-Prakriti of the *Geeta*, Chaitanya-Shakti of Tantra, triple natured (sattvika-rajasika-tamasika) Brahmani-Lakshmi-Maheshvari, although outwardly appear to be different, actually, inwardly they are all but the unified identical form of saguna Brahmamayi (feminine form of Brahman) Parama-(Supreme) Prakriti Adyashakti (Supreme Goddess) Narayani. Fundamentally, they are only different forms of one and only one Brahman. As one and only one Brahman, due to purpose of creation of the world, manifests in nirguna Brahma-Chaitanya, saguna Brahma-Chaitanya or Ishvara, Kutastha-Brahma-Chaitanya, and jiva-chaitanya – similarly, one and only one Brahma-Shakti sachchidananda-mayi (feminine form of sachchidananda), manifests in different forms like Parama-Prakriti, Narayani, Ishvari, Brahmani, Lakshmi, Maheshvari, Maya-Prakriti, Apara-Prakriti, Kundalini Shakti, Mahashakti Durga, etc.

Supreme Goddess Shakti is – Para-Shakti of Narayana, Vishnu-Shakti, Shiva-Shakti, and Mahashakti Mahamaya. She lives in jiva as life giving conscious power. She provides life in jiva through five pranas: prana, apana, vyana, udana, and samana.

Mother Goddess Shakti is the cause of creation, preservation, and dissolution of the world. She is the grantor of salvation; she grants both bhakti (devotion) and mukti (salvation). Thus, She is Maya-Prakriti of *Vedanta*, and also Mahamaya of Shakta-Tantra. If jiva surrenders to Her, She will grant salvation through Her grace; jiva will regain his eternal nature, and individual souls will unite with the Supreme Soul. She is the 'Jnana' of monistic Vedantik; 'Para-bhakti' of Dualist or Qualified monist; 'Chaitanyamayi Kula Kundalini; and 'Mula-Prakriti' of *Sankhya*.

Goddess Shakti is Veda, Shruti, Smriti, Purana, Tantra, and spirit of all Yoga; She is 'Vak' (speech); She is the grantor of enlightenment; She controls deadly Kala (time) – that is why She is 'Kali'. She is the conqueror of Kala; therefore, Mahakal Maheshvara is lying under Her feet.

Shakti is also symbol of the immensely charming Goddess – Raseshvari Sri Radha; She is the Ahladini (loving) Shakti of Purushottama Sri Krishna. She pervades in ten directions (everywhere) for the welfare of all inhabitants of the universe; She is also Sri Sri Durga and Dasha-Mahavidyas (Ten Great Wisdom Goddesses) i.e. Kali, Tara, Shohrashi, Bhuvaneshvari, Bhairavi, Chhinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagala, Matangi, and Kamala.

Supreme Mother Goddess Shakti is definitely worthy of obeisance by all, worship by all.

1.2 Dasha-Mahavidyas

(Ten Great Wisdom Goddesses)

Brahman is also Shakti; thus, Brahman and Shakti are identical. When Brahman is inactive, Shakti performs creation-preservation-dissolution. Again, when Brahman is active, Shakti enters into maha yoga nidra (great sleep or rest), and dissolution occurs in this phase. Therefore, these threefold cosmic functions of creation-preservation-dissolution rest in the hands of Brahma-Shakti Mahamaya. Thus, She is branded by different names such as Maha-Shakti, Para-Shakti, Vaishnavi-Shakti, Chaitanya-Shakti; She is also manifested as Goddess Durga and Dasha-Mahavidyas (Ten Great Wisdom Goddesses).

Each of the ten goddesses of Dasha-Mahavidyas performs a specific cosmic function. They are generally described in the following order: (1) Kali, (2) Tara, (3) Shohrashi, (4) Bhuvaneṣhvari, (5) Bhairavi, (6) Chhinnamasta, (7) Dhumavati, (8) Bagala, (9) Matangi, and (10) Kamala.

In the galaxy of Dasha-Mahavidyas, the first and second i.e. Kali and Tara are really Mahavidyas (Great Wisdom Goddesses) and others are just Vidyas (Wisdom Goddesses). Like supreme affectionate Mothers, these tenfold great wisdom forms of the one and only one Brahma-Shakti, encompassing the whole cosmos, have been protecting the endless living kingdom in all respects throughout the ages.

What may be the significance of classifying the Vidyas into ten is discussed as below:

Though space is infinite, for the purpose of our grasp and understanding, this is divided into ten directions: east, west, south, north, south-east, south-west, north-east, north-west, above and below; similarly, one infinite Mother Brahma-Shakti Mahamaya is manifested as ten outstanding personalities.

- Knowledge is one, and consciousness is also one and same everywhere; but it is grasped and understood in ten different ways by our ten sense organs: skin, eye, ear, tongue, nose, mouth, foot, hand, anus, and genital; in the same way, one Divine Mother, Mahamaya, is sensed and worshipped as ten different facets, i.e. Ten Great Wisdom Goddesses.

First Mahavidya Kali – The Conqueror of Kala (Time)

Whoever conquers kala (time); that is Kali. Thus, kala (time) is under complete control of Mother Kali; surrendered, arrested, and lying as a corpse under Her feet. Endless living kingdom is flowing through ages. Past, present, and future – everything is drifting by the current of time. Thus, jivas (living beings) are revolving under time cycles of birth and death. If by sadhana (spiritual practice) of universal Mother Goddess Kali, the controller of time, sadhak (spiritual practitioner) wins Her grace, time can not touch him. Once the sadhak is granted this salvation by winning the grace of Mother Goddess Kali, he never returns back to this death-like world. The limited form of time can not affect him. Sadhak gains salvation by sitting in the lap of the Goddess Kali, the conscious power of endless time. Thus, Kali is the grantor of salvation; sadhak resides with great joy in the peaceful forever lap of the time-controller and the salvation-grantor Kali. The universal Mother Kali is always south-facing, and Her right foot is placed on the chest of Lord Shiva.

In our modern time, Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa, Avatara or reincarnation of God, one of the greatest religious teachers of all time, was a great devotee of Mother Goddess Kali. By his incredible simple teachings he had inspired millions of devotees and reestablished the foundation of universal spiritualism in India and abroad. Please refer to "Aloukik lilay Sri Ramkrishna, Ma Saroda, Swamiji" – volume 1, by Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay, for an excellent discussion about the miracles of Sri Ramkrishna.

Second Mahavidya Tara – The Savioress

The Goddess, Who protects or saves us from three (all) types of troubles – adhibhoutika (originating from the five gross physical elements or bhutas), adhidaivika (originating from natural disasters), and adhyattvika (spiritual) – and Who grants us the supreme knowledge, is called Tarini or Tara. Tara is full of knowledge, supreme consciousness, without any discrimination, and Brahmamayi (feminine aspect of Brahman). She is shunya (void, but does not mean absolute negation, it means nirguna, nirakara, infinite form of Brahman); and also purna (perfect, saguna, sakara, full finite form of Brahman).

One can be enlightened with the knowledge of Brahman; knowledge of indiscrimination; the supreme knowledge by Tara sadhana. Attainment of this supreme knowledge is rare. This supreme knowledge can be obtained only through firm brahmacharya (complete abstinence from sexual pleasure), indiscrimination, intense sincerity and single-mindedness, and complete surrender to the Goddess Tara. This Tara sadhana is branded as the highest level of Tantra. Realization of Mother Goddess Tara through sadhana destroys the ignorance and removes the illusion of sadhak; he is granted with the supreme insight and power (siddhi); he does not return again in this transient and full of ignorance world; he regains his true blissful nature; and lives for ever with joy and peace in the heaven of eternal knowledge. Mother Tara is north-facing and Her left leg is placed on the chest of Lord Shiva.

The most famous devotee of Mother Goddess Tara in this age of Kali yuga is Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, avatara of Lord Shiva. This whole book is essentially about his remarkable spiritual life.

Shohrashi or Tripurasundari–Power of Perfection

Shohrashi is the worldly consciousness based knowledge of tripura (three cities) – creation, preservation, and dissolution. Super consciousness Shohrashi grants, at the same time; materialistic wealth, and also spiritual enlightenment; yogic power (siddhi) to jivas or Her children. Because of these two wealths, She is worshipped in the world as Raj-Rajeshvari (supreme ruler of the universe); She dispels suffering, poverty, and disease of Her children; and She is also 'Sri' i.e. She grants both earthly and spiritual wealth; that is why another name of Shohrashi is 'SriVidya'.

Famous as the land of Lord Shiva, Kashi or Varanasi, the oldest grand center of religion and culture of India, is the main holy place of Shohrashi or Tripuri Vidya or SriVidya. Saguna Brahmamayi Shivani (Goddess as wife of Lord Shiva), presiding deity of Kashi, resides forever in the name of Annapurna in Kashi as majestic of sixteen (representing completeness or fullness like full-Moon) powers. Thus, Kashi is full of materialistic wealth and also spiritual wealth i.e. siddhi. Throughout the past ages, there had been a revelation of thousands and thousands of all level siddha mahapurushas (saints) in Kashi; and this trend has been continuing even to the present time.

Bhuvaneshvari –Supreme Queen of the Universe

Fourth Vidya of the one and only one Brahma-Shakti is

Bhuvaneshvari. Goddess Bhuvaneshvari is the controller of the fourteen inner faculties of gross and subtle bodies of jivas or Her children. These fourteen faculties are – pancha jnanendriyas (five organs of cognition – hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, and smelling), pancha karmendriyas - (five organs of action – speech, hand, foot, excretion, and creative), manas (mind), buddhi (intellect), chitta (individual consciousness), and ahamkara (ego). This power of enlightenment Goddess Bhuvaneshvari attracts Her children from the ignorance to enlightenment. Thus, as a controlling power of these fourteen faculties, universal Mother Goddess Bhuvaneshvari is specifically identified as supreme queen of the fourteen Bhuvanas (worlds).

Bhairavi – The Fearful and the Graceful

In the course of cosmic functions of creation-preservation-dissolution, Brahma-Shakti is sometimes terrible and sometimes compassionate; thus, in the spiritual heart of sadhak, She is sometimes fearful and sometimes immensely graceful. Her disciplining and kindness, both are for the welfare of Her children. This Brahma-Shakti is distinctly specified as Bhairavi.

Chhinnamasta – Controller of Five Vital Airs

By severing Her own head, Mother is drinking Her own blood; this form of Brahma-Shakti is although fearsome and absurd, its inner meaning is very deep and significant.

This blood is the symbol of prana (vital air); drinking of Her own blood means sacrificing Her own vital air (prana). In every living being, panchaprana or panchavayu (five vital airs) are working at every moment. These five vital airs are – prana, apana, vyana, samana, and udana. These are responsible for birth, growth, and death of jiva's body. Therefore, Creation-preservation-dissolution is being performed through these five vital airs. Thus, universal Mother is nourishing every jiva with this affectionate flow of vital airs; in this lively world, jiva lives by breathing these five vital airs.

This form of Mother Chhinnamasta is the symbol of sacrificing prana through prana.

Dhumavati – Power of Destruction

In the cosmic function of Brahma-Shakti, She keeps all of Her created jivas in the cycles of birth and death by obscuring the self-knowledge through the bondage of illusion. This controller of death Goddess is terrible to the ignorant and desire bounded hungry children. However, if Her children completely surrender to Her, She grants self-realization and bliss by enlightening and removing illusion.

Thus, for removal of illusion, attainment of self-realization, and regaining of true identity, we should worship Goddess Dhumavati with earnest devotion.

Bagala – Conqueror of the Enemies

This great form of Brahma-Shakti saves jiva or Her children from the internal and external harmful vices or enemies; by the grace of the Goddess, children vanquishes enemies and subdues vices.

As She protects her devoted children from all kind of external enemies; She saves Her children also from the internal six inherent vices (shahra-ripus) – sex passion, anger, greed, infatuation, vanity, and envy; Besides, She protects Her children from harmful disease, natural disaster, and evil influence of planet; and She grants also comfort, piece, good fortune, and friendship etc.

Thus, devotees and sadhakas worship Goddess Bagala to win Her favor to control and conquer all external and internal enemies and vices.

Matangi – Power of the Divine Word (Vak)

This Vidya of Brahma-Shakti is the cause of power of word (Vak); that is why; worship of Goddess Matangi is performed to control power of word. Self-restraint of word power leads to achieve jiva's over-all control; devotee and sadhak can gain extraordinary power in life by controlling word and tongue; at the root of every sadhana there is intensive control of word and tongue.

Thus, it is particularly beneficial to worship Goddess Matangi for attaining physical, mental, and spiritual control and power.

Kamala – Grantor of Worldly Wealth

The last Vidya in the list of Brahma-Shakti's Dasha-Mahavidyas is Kamala. This graceful Goddess like Lakshmi of Brahma-Shakti is at the same time; a wonderful, charming, and sweet maternal image, granting wealth, comfort, peace, good fortune, elegance, friendliness, compassion, and pleasance. Thus, if a sadhak worships this peaceful, divine, and pleasant form of the universal Mother Goddess Lakshmi, he attains unlimited peace, comfort, good fortune, and pleasure – which are absolutely desirable in this materialistic world.

Worship of Dasha-Mahavidyas

Parama-Prakriti, Brahma-Shakti, Brahmamayi Herself in the form of

Narayani, Dasha-Mahavidyas pervade throughout Her endless universe.

Worshipping of this cluster of Dasha-Mahavidyas as a unit is performed in many places of this holy land of India. In addition, Dasha-Mahavidyas are worshipped in the holy land of Nepal and also in Bangladesh.

There are temples of Dasha-Mahavidyas in many places of India, and daily worship is performed in these temples. Among these temples of Dasha-Mahavidyas, following distinguished names are worth mentioning:

- at Kamakhya in Assam.
- at Kalighat (founded by Satyananda Puri) in Kolkata.
- at Barahanagar in Bengal.
- at Bikrampur, Bangladesh; founded by Chand Roy and Kedar Roy of Sripur.
- famous temple at Mehar.
- near famous temple of Pashupatinath in Nepal.

Dasha-Mahavidyas are ten great paths of knowledge. Each of the Dasha-Mahavidyas is a Brahma-Vidya. The sadhak of any one of these Vidyas (paths of knowledge) attains salvation. Once an aspirant takes to the Deity, the Deity takes upon itself the sadhana; this is the characteristic of these Mahavidyas.

However, in the family of Dasha-Mahavidyas, Goddess Tara is the supreme Vidya or Mahavidya; She is the most gracious of all.

1.3 Mahavidya Tara

Different Names of Goddess Tara and Taravidya

'Tara' means who saves; that savioress is the universal Mother Tara; because She saves, Her other name is 'Tarini'.

Following episode of Her 'Tarini' name is wonderful:

In the earliest phase of creation, during churning of the ocean, this Adibhuta (primordial) Brahmasanatani (feminine of eternal Brahman) saved Shiva from the ocean-churned product of deadly poison. Throat of Shiva became blue due to this terrible poison; from that day onwards Shiva is called as Neelakantha. Nobody else had power to drink this deadly poison. Thus, immortal Shiva had to drink this; but when Shiva was turned blue because of severe burning sensation from the action of poison, all the Gods and Goddesses including Brahma and Vishnu had to make a distressed call for help. In response to this call, Goddess Tara – the Adibhuta (primordial), Brahmasanatani, and occupier of pancha-shunya-akasha (five empty spaces representing infinity) – appeared before all Gods and Goddesses.

Mother Goddess Tara took Shiva in the lap like Her child, and breast fed Him with the nectar (amrita) of Her breast milk; Shiva was relieved from the terrible burning sensation from poison by drinking that amrita; and He was naturally very delighted. Thus, because She rescued or saved Shiva from action of that terrible poison, She is called 'Tarini'.

She is called 'Neela Saraswati'; because She is the provider of 'Vak' (speech) in the heart of jiva. She is also called 'Ugra-Tara'; because of Her fierce outward form.

She is pranava or AUM – the controller of creation-preservation-destruction. She is called 'Ekajata'; because She liberates. She is also called 'Vikatakhya'; because She has been saving everybody; all Gods, Goddesses, and jivas in all four yugas – Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali – from vikat or terrible disasters.

"Taravidya is Mahavidya (Supreme path of knowledge) and Mahasiddhavidya (path of attaining supreme spiritual goal), particularly in this Kaliyuga" – [*Mayaneela and Taranigam*].

It has been described in *Tara Nigama Tantra* that She pervades in the pancha-shunya-akasha. She is the Mahadevi (Supreme Goddess). She is worshipped in the triple forms as Kali, Tara, and Durga; "Actually, they are all same. Only play of threefold by the one" -[*Maya Tantra and Guptasadhan Tantra*].

Mother Tara is the Goddess of indiscrimination; only he is worthy of Taravidya, who can perform sadhana considering pure and impure as same without any discrimination. Among all Tantrik sadhanas, Tara sadhana is the highest, most dangerous, and last sadhana. It is not possible to perform this greatest sadhana of Taravidya in accordance with Tantra; unless, sadhak is extraordinary practitioner of brahmacharya (complete abstinence from sexual and secular pleasure), high-spirited, and also full of extreme severity. In comparison, sadhana of Kali or other Vidyas is very much easy.

Thus, according to Tantra, only sadhak with absolution from all sins, free from all discriminations, perfect non-dualist, brave, indifferent to pure and impure, perfect brahmachari (practitioner of brahmacharya); and with complete dedication of mind, soul, and body to Mother Tara; is worthy to perform Tara sadhana. This type of sadhak is fulfilled with void-ness (shunyata, awareness of nirakara, nirguna, infinite form of Brahman) and also with perfect-ness (purnata, awareness of sakara, saguna, full finite form of Brahman). Only this kind of sadhak can attain grace of the Brahmamayi Mother Goddess Tara, Who is the greatest Vidya of Dasha-Mahavidyas, Who is void (shunyamayi or nirakara) and also perfect (purnamayi or sakara).

Tara Sadhakas

There is no other Brahma sadhana which is so terrible; so beautiful; so sweet; and also so severe. Thus, for ages, there are only very few siddha (who successfully attained divine grace) sadhakas of Mahavidya Tara. Without being a very high level sadhak, no body else can perform sadhana of this Mahavidya or Brahmavidya. It is not possible to attain siddhi (accomplishment of siddha) in this mystical sadhana of Brahmamayi by ordinary level male or female sadhakas. Because, She is at the same time, Brahman, Shakti, atma, nirakara, beyond triple gunas. She is also, for the benefit of the world, full of tri-fold gunas, beyond controversy, protector, prana in the heart of all jivas, dispeller of maya and illusion of jiva, eternal truth, grantor of eternal bliss, and provider of both bhakti (devotion) and mukti (liberation). Thus, throughout the four yugas of Sattva, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali there are not many sadhakas and siddhas in this great Brahmavidya Mahavidya Tara sadhana. Following exceptional and extraordinarily fortunate sadhakas who had become siddhas in this Mahavidya are distinctly mentionable: Great sage Vashishthadeva who was manasputra (son born out of mind or fancy) of Brahma, Dattatreya, Bhrigu, Durvasa, and similar sages and saints.

In this Kali yuga, following remarkable names of the outstanding sadhakas who had become siddhas in this Mahavidya are:

Kavindra Karnabharanam, Kamdev Tarkik, Yadavendra, Brahmanandagiri, Bishe Khyapa, Anandanath, Raja Ramkrishna, Kamalakanta, Kailaspati, Khaki Baba, Parama Purusha Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, Alokananda, Panchanan Mishra, Dayananda Saraswati, Tarakhyapa, Mahanandagiri, Nigamananda, Chakrabortybaba, Mani Gosai, Jatama, Shakambhari Bhairavi, Aghoribaba, Nirgunananda Brahmachari, Paharibaba, Tarananda, Kumarananda, Lalkhyapa, Bishe Khyapa (second), Ramnath Aghori, Bhuluababa, Nangababa, Itegosvai, Ramgati Bandopadhyay, Bhuvaneshvari Devi, Dayalgiri, Sukhananda, Tivvatananda, Jangurubaba, Napitgosai, Varadakanta, Pagalbaba, Radharani Bhairavi, Matangimayi, Jatababa, Bhairavadas Jnyanananda, Kalikananda, Mahatma Devidas, Rangama, Sushil Maharaj, Khyamananda, etc.

Siddhi of Taravidya

Taravidya is a very secret Mahavidya. Siddha of Taravidya attains great insights. Nature surrenders completely to his control. Thus, whoever becomes siddha of Taravidya, he attains complete Godhead; and all mysteries of the universe, secret insight of cosmic functions of creation-preservation-dissolution, and all subtle and gross causal powers of this world become visible to him. Nothing of this universe remains unknown to him. Then, realizing the occupier of all space, Brahmamayi, void (nirakara) and also perfect (sakara) Mother Goddess Tara as one and identical with the living kingdom; sadhak unites with that immortal, eternal, and radiant Brahma-Tara (Absolute kingdom of God).

Manifestation of Goddess Tara

Mahavidya Tara is worshipped forever in the universe as ultimate void (nirakara), absolutely perfect (sakara), and very delightful knowledge. Her eight cosmic manifestations for the benefit of the worshippers are:

> *"Tara, chogra, mahogra, chavajra, neela saraswati;*
> *Kameshvari, bhadrakali, ityashtou tarinismrita."*
> – [*Maya Tantra*]
>
> – "Ashta Tara or eight Taras are – Tara, Ugra-Tara, Vajra, Neela, Saraswati, Kameshvari, and Bhadrakali (in some Shakta-Tantras, 'Chamunda' is mentioned instead of 'Bhadrakali)."

There are external as well as internal manifestation of Ashta Taras. Ashta pithas (eight holy places) in different parts of India represent external manifestation of Ashta Taras; and, following eight subtle consciousness centers (chakras) in the yogadanda (spine) represent internal manifestation of Ashta Tara – Muladhara, Svadhishthana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha, Ajna, Soma, and Sahasrara.

1.4 Tara Tattva

Aumkaramayi Tara

Brahmashakti 'Tara' is the beginning-less Shakti of Brahman; She is Parashakti, Parama-Prakriti, Parama-Vaishnavi-Shakti, primordial Mother and Controller of creation-preservation-dissolution of the universe – Parama-Brahmamayi – and Mahadevi.

Mother 'Tara' exists in the form of Shabda-Brahman AUM.

'Tar' = 'Aumkara' or the divine sound 'AUM";

'a' = source power (Adhara Shakti).

Thus, the Goddess is worshipped in the three-world in the name of Brahmasvarupini (in the form of Brahman), and Aumkaramayi (presiding deity of AUM) 'Tara'.

That great name of savior Brahman – 'Hare Krishna Rama' is name of the great liberation. The main structure of this great name is:

A – (Hara); U – (Krishna); M – (Rama) i.e. 'AUM'.

Brahmamayi Tara is the source power of this word "AUM".

Thus, the significance of the concept and word-meaning of 'Tara' is profound; She is at the same time, Parama-Prakriti and Parama-Purusha, and also Purna-Brahma-Narayani and Narayana. In the divine act of incarnation of Brahma-Shakti, She was incarnated as Sita and Ramachandra; thus, Tara is the supremely-combined and full of charm image of Parama-Vaishnavi-Shakti Sita and Parama-Purusha Ramachandra. 'Ta' of Sita and 'Ra' of Rama, together, is Brahma-Shakti 'Tara'.

By reciting (japa) only this Shabda-Brahman, Mahamantra, and Mahanama 'Tara'; sadhak enjoys the same great benefit of worshipping nirguna Brahman and reciting names of three-fold saguna Brahman (Brahma-Vishnu, Shiva). In reality, all three forms of saguna Brahman is basically only One; Sadhak should seek all three in One and attain complete realization; Aumkaramayi, Brahmamayi 'Tara' is that One – in Whom exist all these three different deities as One.

Another symbolic significance of AUM is:

A = Creation (srishti - Brahma);

U = Preservation (sthiti – Vishnu);

M = Dissolution (laya – Maheshvara).

Thus, Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara – all three are ever present in the Brahmamayi and Aumkaramayi Tara; She is at the same time, cause of creation-preservation-dissolution of the whole universe. Thus, Adibhuta (primordial) and Brahmasanatani (eternal Brahman) Taradevi creates with the power of Brahma, preserves with the power of Vishnu, and destroys with the power of Maheshvara – [*Neela Tantra*]

Shunyamayi and Purnamayi Tara

Mother Goddess Tara is at the same time shunyamayi (void – nirguna, nirakara) and purnamayi (perfect – saguna, sakara); She is nirguna and also saguna – Aumkaramayi. She is shunya-mayi and pervades in pancha-shunya-akasha (five boundless empty spaces or infinity). There are fifty empty spaces in this great void of the vast akasha (grand space). Brahmamayi, Sachchidanandamayi Tara pervades in the pancha-shunya-akasha. Thus,

> "*Akashasta mahakasham parakasham paratparam;*
> *Tattvakasham suryakasham akasham panchalakshanam.*"
> – [*Akasha Samhita*]
>
> – "Akasha (gross – earth, subtle – Muladhara Chakra), Mahakasha (gross – water, subtle – Svadhishthana Chakra), Parakasha (gross – fire, subtle – Manipura Chakra), Tattvakasha (gross – air, subtle – Anahata Chakra), and Suryakasha (gross – ether, subtle – Vishuddha Chakra)."

As we find different inner significances in the meditation (dhyana) of Gayatri (Vedic Goddess Savitri-Gayatri) – 'Brahmani' (representing Creator) in the morning, 'Vaishnavi' (representing Preserver) in the noon, and 'Shivani' (representing Destroyer) in the evening – in the same way, there are different spiritual thoughts and forms associated with the Tara meditation, Tara Gayatri (mystic mantra for japa), and Tara prayer. Thus, Tara tattva (principle or philosophy of Tara) is not just Brahma tattva (principle of Brahman), srishti tattva (insight of creation), sthiti tattva (knowledge of preservation), and shunya tattva (awareness of nirakara form of Brahman). It is also supreme laya tattva (principle of dissolution). She is the destructive power Mahadevi Shivani; She is Dasha-Mahavidyas; and She is also the demon-killer Mahashakti Sri Sri Durga.

Tara tattva is called laya tattva, because, all illusion of desire is dispelled by the name of Tara; She destroys all earthly desires of jiva by the fire of knowledge – [*Narada Pancharatra*]. Tara sadhak is filled with the great secret of void-ness (shunyata). Thus, this supreme knowledge or Brahma tattva was known to only few sages like Vashishthadeva, Durvasa, Dattatreya, Vrigu, and Parashurama.

Mahapith Tarapith

Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara personally described limitless glorious play of universal Mother Brahmamayi Taradevi. Thus, for ages, in Mahapith Tarapith; the eternal playground of holder – preserver – savior – and destroyer of three worlds Taradevi; there has been great synthesis of all religious cultures – Brahma, Shakta, Shaiva, and Vaishnava.

Tarapith is the place of illusion dispeller or the place of salvation; because, Taradevi is nirguna (feminine - devoid of guna), nirakara (feminine - formless) or shunyamayi. Mind of Tara sadhak becomes free of illusion with the attainment of Her grace by worshipping Taradevi in Tarapith; he attains great enlightenment. Thus, Tarapith is the place of liberation. Again, because Sati's third eye or spiritual eye fell in this illusion-dispeller land, Tarapith is known as the land of liberation or enlightenment. Here, by the grace of Brahmamayi Mother Tara, sadhakas attain supreme knowledge of Brahman (Brahma-jnan). In all ages, many aspirants have been enlightened here with knowledge of Brahman. Thus, there has been always a continuous flow of seekers of both knowledge and salvation in this holy land of enlightenment.

Brahma-Shakti Taradevi is also the second Mahavidya of Dasha-Mahavidyas. Thus, for ages, there has been no shortage of sadhakas coming to Tarapith for Tara sadhana; from Satyayuga to this time of Kaliyuga, eleven thousand sadhakas have attained siddhi in this most powerful site of Shakti; it is said in Tantra, that by the end of Kaliyuga 100,000 sadhakas and sadhikas (feminine of sadhakas) will attain siddhi in Tarapith. Thus, this Mahapith Tarapith or Satipith has been specifically identified as Maha-Shaktipith (great land of Shakti), Tarapith is also well-known in India as the greatest site of Tantra sadhana.

More profoundness of Tara tattva is evident when we realize that Brahma-Shakti or Mahashakti Taradevi is also gracefully present in Tarapith in Her mild form of Parama-Vaishnavi Shakti. For ages, in the fourteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight (shukla) during the month of Ashvin (September – October), Vishnu Parva (specific sacred days for worshipping Vishnu), there is grand celebration of the greatest puja (worship) of Tarapith - puja of the majestic image of Taradevi, which is the supremely combined form of Parama-Prakriti Sita and Parama-Purusha Ramachandra. There is not another such Shakti puja (worship of Shakti) anywhere in the world. Taradevi is in reality same as Kali. Second Mahavidya of Kali is Tara; still, puja of this Tara-Kali is celebrated in the fourteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight, not in the new Moon of dark fortnight (it is generally considered that the most auspicious time for worshipping Kali is new Moon of dark fortnight).

Another great festival of Mother Tara of Tarapith is chariot-riding (Ratha-Yatra) ceremony in the month of Ashahr (June – July). In this ceremony, Mother Kali rides a chariot; this is an unprecedented event in the history of Shakti sadhana. Nowhere is it seen that Shakti or Kali rides chariot in both forward and backward journey. Here, Mother Tara symbolizes the integral nature of Shyam (Lord Krishna) and Shyama (Goddess Kali). She is Shyama; She is Shyam; and She is also Lord Jagannatha of Puri in India. Mother Tara is gracefully present in the chariot of the Lord Jagannatha of Puri – this is also a deep secret (in general, sadhak does not worship, at the same time, Vaishnava God like Jagannatha and Shakta Goddess like Mother Kali. Chariot riding of Mother Tara will be discussed in more detail in the section – 'Ratha-Yatra').

This integral sadhana of Shyam and Shyama is another bright feature of the Tara tattva (philosophy of Tara sadhana). Mother

Tara is same as Sri Radha, embodiment of supreme love and devotion. Thus, in the feelings of Vaishnavas, Tarapith and Vrindavan (sacred place in India, famous as play ground of Sri Radha and Krishna) are one and the same. In the light of self-realization, sadhak visualizes the integrity of Shyam and Shyama in this Mahapith, which is an eternal land of great synthesis of all creed, religious paths, and worshipful chosen Gods (Ishtadevas).

As Tarapith is the land of illusion-dispeller, enlightenment, and inseparability of Shyam and Shyama; in the same way, Mahapith Tarapith is also the land of grand unification of Shiva-Shakti. Thus, Tara tattva is also Shiva tattva. Shiva is beyond triple gunas. Therefore, Mother Tara is also nirguna and nirakara. Again, She is the embodiment of triple guna, and sakara. She is graceful and also terrible. In the Mahapith Tarapith or Satipith, Bhairava Chandrachuhra is the Pith-Maheshvara (Shiva of the Shaktipith). He is eternally united as one with Taradevi. Thus, Mother Tara is Parama-Yogini (Supreme female ascetic). Shiva is in the form of Rudra. Thus, in Her eternal playing site of Tarapith, Mother Tara is gracefully present as Rudrani (feminine aspect of Rudra). She is ever present here as Ugra-Tara or destructive power of Shiva. Thus, Tarapith is the land of – sacrifice, enlightenment, visible form of great space, illusion-dispeller, void-ness of the void Mother Tara, beyond triple gunas, and full liberation.

In the Tara tattva, there is a great synthesis of all tattvas (philosophies). There is nothing beyond Tara tattva. Thus, from time immortal, there has been grand unification of all spiritual thoughts and cults in this ancient Mahapith. Mahapith Tarapith is like a great ocean of all spiritual sadhanas. Grand rivers from all paths of creed, cult, and worshipful chosen Gods have been united in this great ocean. Thus, for ages, from all corners, great streams of Mother Tara's devotees – knower of Brahman, enlightened, Yogi, Tantrik, Aghori, Vaishnava, Sahajia, Aoul, Baul, etc. have been coming to this Mahapith Tarapith for unity. Because She is the embodiment of all kinds of cults, all sadhakas who have come to Tarapith with whatever idea or imagination, all-cultist and immensely compassionate Mother Tara has always revealed Herself to them in the form of their chosen God.

Realization of Mother Tara

All kind of worshipping modes of – Brahman, Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Sun, etc. are gracefully present in Mother Tara. Even then, Her real identity is extremely difficult to comprehend. Unless Brahmamayi Mother Tara does not gracefully disclose it, even greatly enlightened, great Yogi, great Tantrik, and great devotee can not realize the true nature of that endless, limitless, beginning-less, immortal, and formless concept. Only that immensely fortunate sadhak who is full of enlightenment, devotion, and yoga can realize it by Her grace. It can not be realized in any other way.

She is primordial Brahmasanatani; Her true nature is hidden; She is sometimes nirakara and sometimes sakara; She is at times beyond and also full of three gunas; She is graceful and also terrible - who can realize Her true identity or essence of Her philosophy? She is worshipped by the creator Brahma, preserver Vishnu, and destroyer great God Shiva; unless She gracefully reveals, how can an individual comprehend that beginning-less, unimaginable, unknowable, beyond dualism, and all-cultist Mother Tara? Whatever little knowledge of Her true nature is known through Her graceful disclosure to Her spiritual children like great sage Vashishtha, Dattatreya, Bhrigu, Durvasa, Parashurama, and other sages, and other devotees - only that much little has been known to the human kind.

Worshipping Features of Tara

Another especially significant Tara tattva is unity in diversity; similarity in dissimilarity; She is beyond pure and impure. Thus, both pure and impure items are distinctly specified for Her worship. The belief that, only through purity She can be realized or She is not realizable through impurity, is totally wrong and is completely opposite to the boundless and endless Tara sadhana.

Mother Tara is everything to the world; there is none other than Her. She is manifested as whole living kingdom. Therefore, as all pure items belong to Tara, impure items also belong to Tara. Thus, in this boundless, endless, and highly spiritualized Brahma sadhana or Tara sadhana, there is no place of such insignificant narrowness. In all other sadhanas, there is discrimination between purity and impurity; but, there is no such discrimination in Tara sadhana; this is entirely a sadhana of unity. Without the knowledge of indifference between purity and impurity knowledge of Tara can not be attained; Tara sadhana can not be performed.

Doctrine of Tara sadhana is beyond of so-called all worthlessness and narrowness. Thus, everything of Tara sadhana - principle, essence, items of worship, ritual; is distinguishable, colorful, and also completely opposite to the worship of other gods and goddesses. Tara sadhana is the one and unique; the best of all in Dasha-Mahavidyas.

In the worldly perception, ritual (achar) of Tara sadhana is called 'bamachara' (left-handed path), as this achara seems to be 'bama' (left or adverse); another meaning of 'bamachara' is the ritual with woman (bama). This bamachara is devoid of difference between pure and impure; free from any rules and regulations; similar to accepting water from the Ganges (the holy river of India) and filthy water as equal without any hesitation.

Pancha-makara (five items of worship each starting with the word 'm') – madya (wine or alcohol), mamsa (meat), matsya (fish), mudra (roasted or fried food), and maithuna (sexual union); are the main ingredients of bamachara sadhana. This is the outward or gross form of pancha-makara; there is also inward or finer form of pancha-makara sadhana, but that is very esoteric and significant (that will be discussed in detail later at the proper place). Enjoyment through this gross or worldly form of pancha-makara gradually leads Tara sadhak to perform inward or spiritual form of pancha-makara sadhana, which is the path of renunciation. In this process, he attains the supreme goal of Tara sadhak which is freedom from ashta-pasha (eight shackles of material bondage) – shame, hatred, fear, fame, family, manners, hunger, and thirst; going beyond enjoyment and renunciation; attainment of Shivattva (purely divine nature) from jivattva (worldly human nature); and realizing his true nature or Tara tattva residing in pancha-shunya-akasha.

Taradevi is 'Bama'; Her left foot is on Shiva. She is the symbol of 'triumph over sex' or She defeats sexual desire. Thus, She is the supreme Yogini (female ascetic); She is the lively icon of continence, luster, and power.

She is more lustrous than ten million Suns; again, She is more pleasant than ten million Moons; She is engaged in pure Chinachara (a specific ritual for worshipping Mother Goddess Tara). Thus, only that kind of sadhak is worthy to perform Her worship according to Chinachara and attain Her grace; who is a great hero, fierce, and enlightened with knowledge of Brahman; and who is able to completely dedicate his mind and body to the non-discriminating Brahmamayi Tara - with complete knowledge of Tara tattva; with complete control of desire even in front of enjoyable items; with complete detachment and calmness; and without any discrimination between pure and impure.

Different Forms of Mother Goddess Tara

Similar to Tara tattva, different forms of Mother Goddess Tara, as specified in Tantra, is also apparently full of contrast and very colorful. Taradevi lives in the cremation ground; but adorned with all ornaments. She is in one hand Shmashana (cremation-ground) Kali; but on the other hand, She is Maha-Lakshmi (great goddess of wealth). She resides with great joy in the fluttering flame of the burning funeral pyre in the great cremation-ground; this is very frightful to the ordinary worldly people and to the men and women inflicted with the illusion of maya.

The tattva of shunyamayi Tara is very secret. She is the supreme form of Shakti; but Her worship is performed in the fourteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight, not in the new Moon of dark fortnight. Here, she is adorned with all ornaments and formal clothing. Also, She rides the chariot. This unified sadhana of Shyam and Shyama is extremely difficult to comprehend; such colorful and apparently full of contrast tattva does not exist anywhere else.

Tara tattva is a very mysterious truth of indiscrimination; the outward expression of this Brahma tattva is revealed in the form, mood, meditation, conception, puja (worship), and rituals of Tara sadhana.

Primarily – Brahmamayi, full of enlightenment, shunyamayi, and nirakara Tara; resides in the fire of enlightenment in the heart-crematory of Her devoted children. Thus, heart of Tara sadhak is devoid of any desire and wish; full of endless aspect of great cremation-ground. Mother Tara loves to reside in the heart-crematory by generating fire of enlightenment.

She is beginningless and endless. Therefore, She can not be bounded by any specific form; nirakara, sakara, all are Her form; whole universe is Her form.

Therefore, Her form according to Tantra is not the only one for attainment of Her grace (Her form according to Tantra will be discussed in detail in proper place). She is allover – sky, air, water, land, heaven, Moon, Sun, planets, stars, infinite atmosphere, fire, seas, mountains, and living kingdom; primarily, all is Her manifestation. Thus, Brahman to a pillar of stone – everything – is She.

As Mother Tara is '*avam manaso gochara*' (beyond of comprehension by word and mind), She is also present in the mind, intellect, chitta (individual consciousness), and 'ahamkara' (ego). Thus, She is the true 'aham' or true self of jiva; She is prana (vital air) of jiva. Through five pranas - prana, apana, vyana, samana, and udana - She is creating-preserving-destroying or She does everything from birth to death. Therefore, She is 'aham' of jiva and also prana of jiva.

This 'aham' belongs to whom? That belongs to Mother Tara; primarily, She is the 'ahamkara' or ego of jiva; but this 'ahamkara' is not the usual personal ego of jiva, which is tainted with ignorance, and inflicted with temporal illusory maya; this 'ahamkara' is the divine, blissful, and eternal 'ahamkara' or atma of jiva. Thus, She resides in the body of jiva as Antaratma or Paramatma; nearest to jiva as consciousness; main supporter of all powers of jiva; as Kulakundalini in Muladhara Chakra; in all jivas, She resides at the same time as – 'aham' or 'prana' or 'atma' or 'Paramatma' or embodiment of consciousness 'Kulakundalini'. This is the 'nirakara' form of Mother Tara.

Only those who directly realizes at the same time, both; inward, secret nirakara form; and outward worldly form of the universe; he can attain the true nature of Tara tattva. He visualizes the endless, boundless, and unified structure of Brahman in the universe; by realizing that 'One' Brahma-Tara allover, inside and outside, he becomes united with the same 'One'. Thus, it is not enough to seek Brahmamayi Tara only in a particular specified outer form; She must be sought and seen at the same time, inside and outside, everywhere.

Mother Tara herself is this endless and visible universe. Again, She is also present in the endless nirakara form. It is She, Who resides in the heart of Her countless children; She is 'antaryamini' (knower of other's mind) to all. This great realization is the Brahma tattva or Tara tattva.

Kaula Sadhak

The supreme and final goal of Tara sadhak is to visualize and realize 'One in all' and 'all in One'. Even residing in this material world, Tara sadhak attains inward tranquility by realizing Brahman; he is granted with the everlasting place in the eternal Home of Mother Tara. Therefore, the sadhak who completely realizes this great knowledge (parama tattva) at the same time in both inwardly and outwardly; visualizes completely Mother Tara in inner and outer nature; he is called a 'Kaula'.

The term 'Kaula' has been originated from the word 'Kula'; the person who has realized twenty-four tattvas (Sankhya tattvas from Prakriti to earth) or 'Kula' i.e. who has conquered this world; he is 'Kaula'. Whoever perceives Brahman and the world of His creation as one and same, he is 'Kaula'. Tara tattva and Brahma tattva are identical. Therefore, that great sadhak who has attained this Tara tattva or Brahma tattva by direct realization is really very fortunate, can be called as a true 'Kaula', and it is he who is truly entitled to supreme tattva or Tara tattva.

1.5 Mahapith Tarapith

Mahadeva and Tarapith

Once upon a time, great God Mahadeva (Shiva) and Uma (wife of Shiva) were chatting in great happiness in the Kailas mountain (part of the magnificent Himalayan mountain). Shivani (wife of Shiva) asked Mahadeva: "Oh Lord; which is the best place in this world for quick spiritual attainment (siddhi)." After hearing this, Mahadeva told the following story:

Daksha (father-in-law of Shiva) undertook a great sacrifice (yagya); he invited all gods and goddesses except Shiva and his wife Sati. Although uninvited, Sati went to the place of sacrifice and requested Her father Daksha to invite Shiva; but Daksha started criticizing Shiva in abusive language. Sati, an extremely devoted wife of Shiva, could not bear this humiliation of Her great husband; Sati became so enraged and heart-broken that She sacrificed Her life. Mahadeva, after hearing the death of His beloved wife Sati, became very furious and inconsolable; He started wandering around the world with Sati's body on His shoulder; and a grave situation of possible de-stabilization of the world occurred. At this critical time, Vishnu with the objective of removing Sati's body from shoulder of Shiva, gradually cut Sati's dead body piece by piece with the help of Sudarshan Chakra (discus, famous weapon of Vishnu).

One piece of Sati's dead body, Her eye-pupil (mani) from the top or third eye, fell at the foot of the great shimul-tree at the bank of Dvaraka River (in Birbhum district of Bengal, India). This Satipith (place where some sacred piece of divine Sati's dead body fell) of eye-pupil (manipith), a secret place of significance similar to famous Kashi, is Tarapith – greatest of all pithas; Taradevi is worshipped here as Ugra-Tara.

After loss of Sati's dead body, Mahadeva started a severe austerities to regain His beloved wife Sati. At this time, suddenly He heard a divine message: "Why are you suffering by undertaking such a harsh austerities? Go to eye-pupil-pith Tarapith and perform 300,000 (three lakhs) japas (recitation of mantra of Mother Tara) according to the system of virachara kulachara. You will be siddha (achiever of objective)." Following this advice, Mahadeva worshipped stony statue of Mother Tara and performed 300,000 japas in one sitting at the foot of the shalmali-tree in Tarapith; and He was granted a vision of Brahmamayi Taradevi. Seeing the magnificentl but terrible stony statue of Taradevi, Mahadeva made obeisance by bending with great devotion to Her. Taradevi blessed Him and said: "Go back to Kailas mountain; You will receive Sati in new form; Mahadeva went back to Kailas with great joy; and afterwards, as told, Sati took birth in the form of Shiva's wife Uma."

After telling the above story, Mahadeva told Uma that the greatest place in the world for attainment of siddhi in a short time is Mahapith Tarapith. Thus,

> *"Tarapitham mahapitham gantavyam yatnatah sada."* [*Tararahasya*]
>
> "Tarapith is a mahapith (great pith); so, go there with utmost sincere devotion."

Three Tarapithas

After the death of Sati in Daksha-yagya, mad Shiva started a frantic dance with Sati's body on His shoulder; the world was almost plunged into dissolution; at this time, preserver of the world Vishnu gradually cut Sati's divine dead body in pieces with the help of Sudarshan Chakra. These sacred pieces, total of 108 in number (not 51; this will be discussed later in detail), were scattered all over the world. Tarapithas, three places in India and Bangladesh where eye-pupils (tara) from the three eyes of Sati's sacred body fell are described in the following table:

Eye-pupil (tara)	Location of Tarapithas	Name of Taradevi	Name of Bhairava (Shiva)
From top eye	At the bank of Dvaraka River, Mahapith Tarapith in Birbhum, Bengal	Ugra-Tara	Chandrachuhra
From right eye	At the bank of Karatoya River, Bhavani Tarapith in Baguhra, Bangladesh	Ekajata Tara, Mahadevi Bhavani	Ruru
From	At the eastern part of Triyugi River, Neela-Saraswati Tarapith in Mithila, Bihar	Neela or Neela-Saraswati	

Thus, there are three Tarapithas in India and Bangladesh; but Mahapith Tarapith in Birbhum is the greatest of all.

In Satya-yuga, great sage Vashishta who was a manasputra (son born of Brahma's mind or thought like Narada) of Brahma, was advised to go to Mahachin for spiritual attainment; there, he met Vishnu and received the clear instructions about critical nature and rituals etc. of Chinachara; and Vishnu told Vashishtha about these three Tarapithas. As described in the *Gupta-Chinachara Tantra*, Vishnu advised him to perform sadhana in the greatest pith among all Tarapithas, the Mahapith Tarapith – where eye-pupil of the spiritual eye of Sati fell, which is the most holy and living site of Ugra-Tara at the bank of Dvaraka River. Accordingly, Vashishthadeva performed sadhana in accordance with Chinachara at the foot of the shimul-tree in Mahapith Tarapith; and attained siddhi. Other than Vashishthadeva, sages like Dattatreya, Parashurama, and Durvasa etc. also attained here siddhi in Taravidya.

Symbol of these three Tarapithas of three eye-pupils of Sati is identified as a triangle or 'Ba'. Thus, this Matrika Tara yantra is distinctly specified as triangular 'Ba' in the Shakti sadhana.

Outwardly –

"Karatoya samarabhya yavaddikaravasini;
Shatayojana vistaram trikonam sarvasiddhidam;
Deva marana michchhanti ki purna manavadeya."
– [*Pithamala Tantra*]

"These three Tarapithas exist in triangular form; in these triangular pithas even gods wish to die; nothing more can be talked about human."

Again, inwardly or subtly, gods and yogis meditate on Parama (great) Brahmamayi Tara in these triangular pithas at the eye-brow center (Ajna Chakra); realize as radiant Goddess; and try to merge heart and mind into this sacred center.

Not only human, but also gods and goddesses worship Adibhuta Brahmasanatani in these inward and outward triangular pithas. Three sides of this triangle or 'Ba' are specified as 'A – Ka-Tha' pithas; 'A' side is trihuta or Neela-Tara at Mithila; 'Ka' side is Ekajata-Tara at the bank of Karatoya River in Baguhra; and 'Tha' side is Ugra-Tara at Tarapith in Birbhum. In the field of Tara sadhana or Shakti sadhana, this 'triangle' or 'Ba' yantra is extremely important. Although there are three Tarapithas, people generally consider the ancient site of great Tantra sadhana and very famous Mahapith Tarapith at Birbhum, Bengal as 'Tarapith' (similarly, Mother Goddess

Tara has eight forms, but in general, unless specified otherwise, people understand 'Tara' as Ugra-Tara.)

Distinct Features of Pithas and Mahapithas

The great living Tarapith of Ugra-Tara in Birbhum is not an ordinary pith; it is a great pith or Mahapith; Following are some specific reasons of calling it as Mahapith:

Firstly, in Satya yuga, eye-pupil of the top eye or spiritual eye of Sati fell in this holy land.

Secondly, for ages, thousands and thousands of sadhakas in generation have been always keeping here Mother Tara in living form by worshipping and attaining siddhi; secret stream of kaula sadhana has been always flowing here as subterranean river.

Thirdly, all the essential and favorable ingredients of Tantrik sadhana exist here; for example, north-bound Dvaraka River, great cremation ground as described in Tantra, and site of pancha-mundi or laksha-mundi's asana (a very special meditating seat which is placed over 100,000 human skulls).

Thus, Tarapith is distinctly identified as both Sati-pith and siddha-pith; and because of the great combination of these two types of pithas it has become a Mahapith.

In general, there are three kinds of 'pithas' - pith, siddha-pith, and mahapith:

Pithas are specific sites where any sacred part of Sati's body fell, and once upon a time, these were made alive by some powerful sadhakas; some examples are: Phullara, Nandikeshvari, Attahas, Kamkali, Prayag, Pushkar, Chattal, etc.

Siddha pithas are places where no part of Sati's body fell, but these were made alive by some great sadhakas or saints; some examples are: Dakshineshvara (Bhavatarini was made alive by Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsadeva), Adyapith, Kalivadi of Meher (Deity was made alive by Sarvananda Thakur), etc.

The great sites where the sacred part of divine Sati's body fell; for ages, where countless sadhakas have been making the universal Mother Goddess alive by sadhana and siddhi; and where all symptoms and favorable atmosphere for Tantra sadhana are naturally present – that ever-living greatly combined sacred pithas of Satipithas and siddhapithas are known as 'Mahapithas'; some examples are: Tarapith, Bakreshvar, Kalighat, Kamakhya, Kashi, Jvalamukhi, Himlaj, etc. Thus, Tarapith has been distinctly honored as Mahapith.

Glories of Mahapith Tarapith

Endless glories of Mahapith Tarapith have been described in many Tantras.

Sri Vishnu said:

"Bakreshvarasya aishanyam baidyanathastu purvatam;
Dvarakayam purvabhage tatra tara adhishthita.
Shilamayiti taddevi nivasan shalmalimule;
Pratyaksham sarvayugehasmin chandika sthiti sarvada.
Tatra siddhirna sandeho divaratra muhurtakai;
Akasmat mantrasiddhi sya dugra tara prasadatah."
– [*Gupta Chinachara Tantra*]

– "Pupil of Sati's top eye fell in north-east (ishan) corner of

> Bakreshvar and eastern part of Vaidyanath, and at the foot of shimul-tree on the eastern side of the Dvaraka River; here, Bhagavati Chandi Ugra-Tara is ever present in the form of a sacred piece of stone; there is no doubt that, all of a sudden during day or night, in any moment, mantra-siddhi can be easily attained here."

Brahma also personally described the glory of Taradevi to His son Vashishthadeva; First Mahadeva, and afterwards both Brahma and Vishnu described glory of Tara; so, Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara, all three personally introduced the fact and glory of Tara sadhana in the three worlds; thus, it can be realized in Mother Tara influence of all three (srishti, sthiti, laya - or sattva, rajas, and tamas) qualities.

In *Vashishtha Samhita*, it is said:

> *"Tarini shilarupena yatra pithe tu tishthati;*
> *Tatra yatnena gantavam phala samkhya na vidyate."*
>
> – "There (in Mahapith Tarapith) Tarinidevi is present. Go there with sincerity, and pay homage with great respect; you will attain endless benefits."

The village where Mahapith Tarapith is situated is well-known as 'Chandipur'; because Devi Chandi resides in this village, In this respect, it is said in the "*Maha-Chinachara Tantra*":

> *"Pratyaksham sarvayugehashmin chandika sthiti sarvada."*
>
> – "Because it is the site of Chandi, this village is for ever famous as Chandipur."

This very sacred site is known as Tarapith or Tarapur, because a pupil of Mother Satidevi fell here. Tantra identifies this place as Tarapith or Tarapur; thus, Tarapur and Tarapith are always mentioned together while describing the glory of Tarapith, e.g. –

> *"Ishane bakranasya vaidyanathasya purvatah;*
> *Tarapur midam khyatam nagara bhuvi durlavam."*
> – [*Tararahasya*]
>
> – "There is a village called Tarapur in the north-east corner of Bakranath (Bakreshvar) and eastern side of Vaidyanath; this is a rare place in the world." (There is ample poof that in ancient time there was a village called Tarapur; this subject will be described in detail later).

There are more descriptions of glory of Tarapith or Tarapur and Mother Goddess Tara, e.g. –

> *"Mahapitham vraje nityam na cha pith manuttamam;*
> *Tarapur mahapitham gantavyam yatna ta sada.*
> *Laksha traya japaddevi sarvasiddhishvaro bhavet;"*
> – [*Tararahasya*]
>
> – "Always go to Tarapur (Tarapith) Mahapith considering it as the very best pith; Tarapith is a Mahapith (great pith); so, go there with utmost sincere devotion. Siddhi can be attained there by chanting (japa) only 300,000 (three lakhs) Tara mantra."

This statement is also supported by the *Gupta-Chinachara Tantra*:

> *"Tatpithe tanutyagena mukti tasya karasthita;*
> *Devamaran michchhanti kimkatha aparjana.*
> *Brahmadi devata sarve lajja siddhi yarthosmatan;*

Tatra pithe cha bho vatsa sva sva karma niyojita;
Tatra yatnena gantavyam yatra tara shilamayi."

– "Death in Tarapith immediately grants mukti. Even gods wish to die in Tarapith; forget about human. Brahma and other gods performing Their desired works attained here mayabija and other siddhis. Thus, go to Tara, who is in the form of sacred stone, with deep devotion and respect."

It is again said in the *Gupta Chinachara Tantra*:

"Tarapurstha gantavyam ashvamedham pade pade;
Tatsama prakatasthanam nasti nasti mahiitale.
Trilakshancha jape mantra achiram siddhi bhaga bhavet."

– "There is no other place in this world like the most sacred place of Taradevi – Tarapur (Tarapith); making pilgrimage to Tarapith with devotion and performing there japa and worship. Benefits of Ashvamedha yagya (famous horse-sacrifice, usually performed in the ancient time by great kings) can be attained; siddhi can be achieved by only 300,000 (three lakhs) japas (chanting) of mantra."

In addition to the glories described in Tantras, identity and glories of Tarapith or Tarapur are also described in the old panchalis (a class of Bengali poems celebrating the glory of a deity) of this village. The Bengali poet said with great devotion and reverence:

"Shuna save ekabhave kari nivedana;
Taradevi lila kichhu kariya rachana.
Satya treta dvapara kali chariyuge;
Taramata achhen gram tarapure." etc.

– "Please all listen in the same way as I am telling you based on my writing the lila (activities) of Taradevi. Mother Tara is always present in the village Tarapur – in all four ages – Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali."

Thus, Mahapith Tarapith is glorified and worshipped in all respects by gods, sages, human, and above all personally by Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara. Therefore, this great site of all-conception, all-creed, all-path, and sadhana is very much rare indeed in this world; supremely holy place – Mahapith Tarapith – is one and unique.

1.6 Outward and Inward Meaning of Fifty-One (51) Pithas

Outward Meaning of Fifty-One (51) Pithas

The mythological story of the creation of India-famous fifty-one (51) pithas is known to almost everybody; the story in nutshell is the following:

Prajapati Daksha (father-in-law of Shiva) undertook a great sacrifice (yagya) without Shiva at the Himalayan fountain-head of the Ganges River at Kankhala in Hardwar. Although uninvited and against the wishes of Shiva, daughter of Daksha, Satidevi, went to father's house. Wife of Shiva, Satidevi, was very distressed because father king Daksha did not invite Her dearest husband Shiva in this event of great sacrifice. Still, She had a small hope that, may be at last, father would invite Shiva. But instead of inviting, Daksha reprehended Shiva in a very harsh language. Sati became so grieved and insulted that She sacrificed Her life at the place of sacrifice.

Mahadeva, after hearing this bad news created Virabhadra and sent him to the place of sacrifice. Virabhadra went with a group and destroyed the sacrifice place and killed Daksha. Afterwards, in response to request from Brahma, by Shiva's grace Daksha regained his life but with the goat head.

In the mean time, Shiva became mad and started a cataclysmal dance with Sati's dead body on His shoulder; as a consequence, a grave situation of possible de-stabilization of the world occurred. At this critical time, due to request from gods, Vishnu saved the world by gradually cutting Sati's dead body piece by piece with the help of Sudarshan Chakra (discus, famous weapon of

Vishnu). Every place where some sacred piece of divine Sati's dead body fell becomes the holy Shaktipith – Satipith (commonly identified as fifty-one Satipithas, although this number is not correct); in association with Shakti, at the same time, there was also creation of the self-born Shiva-linga (rounded column symbol of Shiva) in every Shaktipith.

This is in a nutshell the so called mythological story of the creation of fifty-one pithas – which is the outward or physical meaning of Satipithas. However, this is not the real significance of fifty-one pithas. True form, meaning, and philosophical explanation can be found in the theory of creation and in many ancient Tantras.

Generally, people consider these fifty-one holy places as the only Satipithas; but, that is not true; fifty-one pithas are just part of much larger quantity of Satipithas. There are actually one-hundred and eight (108) Satipithas which are scattered in India and abroad. In the *Devi Bhagavata* number of Satipithas is described as one-hundred and eight. However, in many Tantras e.g. *Pithanirnaya, Shivacharita, Tantra Chuhramani, Pranatoshini, Pithamala,* etc., total number of Satipithas is wrongly identified as fifty-one (this will be discussed in great detail in next section).

Inward Meaning of Fifty- One (51) Letters

If fifty-one pithas scattered over many places do not represent the true meaning, naturally, a question can be raised – what is the real significance or inward meaning of fifty-one pithas?

To find out the root source of these fifty-one pithas we have to look into the origin of creation. In the beginning of the creation, there was only one and unique un-manifested Brahman. He wished to become manifested from un-manifested. Thus, He was manifested from nirguna Brahman to saguna Brahman; evolution was started from gradual contraction.

The first creation from His wish was words (shabda); the world was conceived from these words. Tthen, one by one, the world was created from life force and atmosphere. Nirakara Brahman became sakara Brahman and became saguna Ishvara.

Word (shabda) is therefore viewed like Brahman. Shabda is called Shabda-Brahman. Saguna Brahman is sat, chit, and ananda – sachchidananda. Sat means eternity – same status as ever – does not affected by time. Chit is knowledge or manifestation. Ananda means endless joy; 'a' is endless, nanda is joy.

The word 'Sati' in feminine gender originates from this 'sat' word of saguna Brahman. This Sati is the primordial power (Shakti) of saguna Brahman or Ishvara; She is Adya-Shakti (primordial power) Sachchidananda-mayi – Mahashakti (Supreme Power) – Bhagavati Devi.

From this divine body of Mahashakti Sati Bhagavati, words through descending (anuloma) and ascending (vilome) process created sixteen (16) vowels (svara varnas - 'a', 'aa', 'i', 'ee', u', 'oo' etc.) and thirty-five (35) consonants (vyanjana varnas from 'ka' to 'kshha') – total of fifty-one letters (varnas) of Sanskrit alphabet. Shabda-Brahman is forever, immortal, and truth. Thus, it was manifested by dividing into fifty-one letters. Kali presides in descending portion and Taradevi presides in ascending portion of the letters. Fifty-one pithas had been originated from these sacred presiding places or pithas; Shabda-Brahman in the form of fifty-one pithas became the decorative body-ornament of Brahmamayi

Adyashakti. Thus, in the neck of Adyashakti or controller of time Kali, and also in the neck of Mother Tara, there is a garland of fifty-one severed heads representing the fifty-one letters or fifty-one pithas. The source of letters is Sahasrara chakra in head (wish of creation of unmanifested Brahman was originated from Sahasrara).

Mother Kali (also Mother Tara) is Varnamayi because of Her garland of fifty-one severed heads or garland of fifty-one letters; She is the Mother of fifty-one letters forever. Thus, as Her children, whatever we think, speak, pray, sing, imagine, write, everything what we do – is present in these fifty-one letters. Our scriptures – *Veda, Upanishad, Geeta, Chandi, Purana, Tantra* etc.; our great spiritual literatures – *Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata,* etc.; our daily religious duties – sacrificial rite, homa (offerings into consecrated fire), worship, etc.; and our worldly activities – daily study, works, etc; everything is within the realm of the fifty-one letters; nothing is beyond these. Thus, universal Mother holds our all words, thoughts, imagination, praying, etc. – everything – on her vast body by wearing the garland of fifty-one letters. The supreme mantras by which sadhakas and sadhikas performs sadhana; and become siddhas by witnessing the vision of universal Mother – that divine, sacred, and powerful mantras also fall within the domain of fifty-one letters.

It is also seen in different fields of Indian religious sect – Shakta, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Brahma, Gaura, Ganapatya, etc.; that there is a special japa sadhana in ascending and descending order by adding Ishta bijamantra to these fifty-one letters. This provides divine power to the body, mind, and sadhana of sadhak.

As atma is the shell of Paramatma, physical body is the shell of atma. Thus, as there is a garland of fifty-one letters or severed heads on the neck of Paramatma (Supreme Soul) or Adyashakti

Varnamayi Mother Kali or Mother. Tara; in each body, because individual soul is part of Supreme Soul, there is also garland of letters or fifty-one pithas; this has made possible for us to think, imagine, express our feelings through speech and writings at every moment. Thus, for ages, from time immortal, devotees have been realizing God through this garland of fifty-one letters or fifty-one pithas; wise realizes Brahman, yogi realizes Paramatma. Every letter is radiant 'Shabda-Brahman'. Sound is evolved from the letters; again, radiance comes out of sound. Thus, these fifty-one pithas in the nature of Shabda-Brahman are ever conscious in luminous form. As these are conscious and luminous in the body of Varnamayi Brahmamayi universal Mother, these are also conscious in Her integral part - heart of everybody.

Fifty-one letters or pithas are conscious in everybody; also, with respect to the place of sadhana, the Indian spiritual consciousness is concentrated among these fifty-one pithas. This power of Shabda-Brahman is distributed among fifty-one parts (from 'a' to 'kshha'; or brahmarandhra (top most conscious center in Sahasrara in head), to bottom of feet). Not only in India; garland of fifty-one letters in the nature of Shabda-Brahman gracefully exists also in different spheres of this great universe.

This is the inward or underlying real significance of fifty-one pithas or fifty-one letters. These 51 letters are indicated as below:

Nature of 51 Letters	**51 Letters (varnas)**
Vowels (svara varnas)	a, aa, i, ee, u, oo, ri, ree, lri, lrii, e, ai, o, au, am, ah.
Consonants (vyanjana varnas)	ka, kha, ga, gha, ~Na, cha, chha, ja, jha, ~na, Ta, Tha, Da, Dha, Na, ta, tha, da, dha, na, pa, pha, ba, bha, ma, ya, ra, la, va, sha, shha, sa, ha, La, kshha.

There are fifty-one letters or fifty-one pithas; as a part of Paramatma, every one of us has these fifty-one pithas in our body (from top most part brahmarandhra to lowest part feet). These pithas in the nature of luminous Shabda-Brahman are always present within each of us. Fifty-one letters are serially arranged in subtle form in the whole body; some examples are:

Letter or Pith	Location in the Body
'a'	Brahmarandhra
'aa'	Pupil of eye
'i'	Nose
'ee'	Tongue
'u'	Lips

Thus, fundamental truth is that inside every men and women or human beings, fifty-one pithas reside in the form of fifty-one letters.

Universality of the Garland of Fifty-One Letters

Fifty-one letters are the root source of expression of everybody in this world. Although numerous script or pronunciation of various languages are apparently different looking, in principle, all words and sounds present in these vowels and consonants of the fifty-one letters. Thus, the garland of fifty-one letters on the vast body (fifty on chest and one in left hand) of Varnamayi Universal Mother is the primary form of every language of Her all children in the world. Even the lower species creatures or beasts and birds express their feelings with this garland of letters; this is revealed in their calls.

All languages of the world including Sanskrit and other Indian languages belong to this garland of fifty-one letters; sound of all languages is perceived by 'a' to 'kshha'. Every language of the world is full of distinction in respect of its letter and script; even in respect of sound, it is quite prominent; but in principle, all sounds present in the range from 'a' to 'kshha' i.e. belong to the garland of fifty-one letters. As an aid to understanding by the readers, some examples are provided in the following table. It will be noticed that there is similarity in meaning, word, and sound among different languages of the world; and all sounds present in the garland of fifty-one letters:

Language	**English word 'mother' in different languages**
Sanskrit	maataa
Bengali	maa
Hindi	maaijee
Russian	maame
French	maamte
Nepali	aamaa

This 'maa' word (as mother) is sounded as 'maa' in all the abovementioned seven languages; these 'm' and 'aa' are very much included in the fifty-one letters.

Now, words are shown in the following table from sixteen (16) different languages or countries to prove that all of them, although in different scripts, with respect to word and sound belong to the fifty-one letters.

Language or Country	**Words in fifty-one letters of Sanskrit language**
English	phaadaar, goD, vraadaar, etc.
French	maamdaame, mamsiye, vaamjovaa, romaarolaa, mompasaa, etc.
German	gyayate, kaaijaar, berlin, etc.
Russian	leotalshhTaya, pushkin, gorkee, etc.
Greek	ethens, sacreTis, jius, alimpiaa, etc.
Chinese	phaahiyaan, hiuen saam, pikim, etc.
Japanese	hiroshimaa, naagaasiki, tojo, tokyo, etc.
Africa	jimvaavuye, ugaaNDaa, lulumvaa, etc.
Tibetan	taaklaakoT, daalaailaamaa, laasaa, etc.
Nepalese	sherpaa, naamchevaajaar, thiyaamvochi, etc.
America	shikaago, niujaarsi, haliuD, etc.
Egypt	phyaaraaoe, Tutenkaamen, moses, etc.
Australia	melborn, siDni, eDileT, etc.
Arab	baaherin, aaltaajir, kuet, etc.
Italy	rome, sijaar, mark, ayaanTanio, bruTaas, etc.
Portugese	parTugaal, Toriyaam, gyaariNchaa, etc.

English word “father” written as “phaadaar” in above table has five letters - ‘ph’,’aa’,’d’,’aa’, and ‘r’; all of these five letters are included in the fifty-one letters. Likewise, all letters of all languages of the world are also included in vowels and consonants of the fifty-one letters. This is the primary form of every language. Thus, in every men and women, even within the beasts and birds, this garland of fifty-one letters or fifty-one word-pithas always exists in subtle form.

Bijamantra

This garland of fifty-one letters is also the foremost and most important factor in the field of bijamantra. Significance of this in Tantrika religion is magnanimous. If we study in depth the ideology of Indian Tantra, it can be noticed that in ancient time the area of greater India was vast; in that age, in this land of Tantra and Shiva, greater India was divided into three regions:

1. Vishnukranta – vast land extending from Vindhyachala of north India to far-off Chattagram;
2. Ashvakranta – huge area stretching from Vindhyachala to remote Kanyakumarika of south-most India;
3. Rathakranta – extensive land expanding from Vindhyachala to grater China via Sikim and Nepal.

According to the *Shaktimangala Tantra*, in each of the aforesaid three regions, sixty-four Tantras were prevailed i.e. total of three times sixty-four or one-hundred ninety-two Tantras were very much in vogue in that ancient greater India. Therefore, primary source and center place of religion and scriptures of Tantra is India; and in that old age both Bhotchin (Tibbet) and greater China were part of greater India.

Tantrik religion is even anterior to Vedik time (Vaidika Yuga – a very old time in the history of Indian civilization when Aryan introduced four Vedas were in practice). This Siva-spoken noble and liberal religion was in vogue in pre-Aryan period in the non-Aryan land of greater India. Thus, scriptures and ideology of Tantra are entirely India's own scriptures and religion. It was from India, in course of time, Tantra was spread in different countries e.g. Tibet, China, Java, Sumatra, Bali, Japan, etc.

Chanting of bijamantra by adding chandra-bindu to the end of the fifty letters e.g. 'am', 'aam', 'im', 'eem' etc. was very much prevalent in these countries; because, garland of fifty-one letters is the foundation of bijamantra.

Also, bijamantra is a sign language of mantra. Without bijamantra, Ishtadeva or Ishtadevi can never be visualized. Source of all bijamantras is the garland of fifty-one letters. Every bijamantra is present in one or more tattvas (principles); thus, every letter resides in one specific tattva corresponding to that letter. Purusha – Prakriti tattva or twenty-four tattvas of Sankhya Philosophy, tattva of human body, akasha, five gross matters including earth (pancha-bhutas) etc. are all included in the tattva of fifty-one letters. Thus, letter or bijamantra is the great synthesis of all tattvas.

Vowels and consonants with the addition of chandra-bindu ('am') or visarga ('ah') become bijamantras which are hidden in all tattvas. Some selected bijamantras are discussed as below:

kreem

With this mantra Kalika should be worshipped. 'Ka' is Kali; 'ra' is Brahman; 'ee' is Mahamaya; nada (crescent Moon part of chandra-bindu) is the Mother of the universe; bindu (one dot part of chandra-bindu) is the dispeller of sorrow. So, kreem means – 'O universal Mother Mahamaya Kali, dispel my sorrow'.

streem

'sa' means deliverance from difficulties; 'ta' means savior or Tara; 'ra' means salvation or liberation; 'ee' means Mahamaya; nada means Mother of the universe; bindu means dispeller of sorrow. Thus, the meaning of streem is – 'O universal Mother, liberator, and trouble-remover Mahamaya Tara, dispel my sorrow'.

hum

In this mantra, 'ha' is Shiva; 'u' is Bhairava; nada is the

Supreme; bindu means the dispeller of sorrow. Thus, the meaning of hum is – 'O Brahmamayi Supreme Shakti, keeper of great Shiva as Bhairava, dispel my sorrow'.

In this connection, it is important to know that, according to the type of bijamantra, AUM or namah is used at the beginning, and namah or svaha is used at the end in chanting bijamantra. It is also noticeable that, one dot ("am" or bindu) is dispeller of sorrow and two dots ("ah" or visarga) is symbol of joy.

Some more examples of common bijamantras representing specific Gods are:

Bijamantra	**Representing Gods**
kleem	Krishna
shreem	Lakshmi
dum	Durga
haum	Shiva
aim	Saraswati
gam	Ganesha
lam	Indra

Above discussion of bijamantra conclusively proves that from bijamantras we can get the idea of tattvas and also the secret symbol of different Gods. All bijamantras and prayers of Indian sadhana are included in the garland of fifty-one letters in all respects.

Thus, garland of fifty-one letters, source of all bijamantras and representing fifty-one sacred Satipithas, glitters over the vast chest of universal Mother Kali and Tara; and it signifies the real inward meaning of fifty-one pithas.

1.7 History of One-Hundred Eight (108) Satipithas

Different Traditions Regarding the Number of Satipithas

We have discussed in the earlier section about Daksha-yagya and how 108 sacred Satipithas were created. In the old *Devi Bhagavata* these 108 Satipithas have been specifically identified. In addition, humble writer (Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay) of this book is really fortunate to know about the details of 108 Satipithas directly from the mouth of many distinguished and famous great sadhakas and sadhikas belonging to various Indian religious sects e.g. Shakta, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Brahma, Ganapatya, Saura, etc. It was also revealed by them that the secret principle of 108 japas (chanting) in the Indian religious practice is actually based on this 108 number of Satipithas. No sadhana is possible without Shakti; root of all sadhana is Shakti; Shakti is also identical to great Vaishnavi. It is again Shakti Who is also Brahmamayi; there are many paths, but there is only one destination. Thus, tradition of 108 japas is prevalent in all Indian religious practices. In addition, from ages, there has been the tradition of 108 leaves of bel Tree, 108 leaves of basil plant, 108 hibiscus and lotus flowers, and 108 types of bhoga (food items offered to Ishtadeva or Ishtadevi) in the Indian worship items.

Many people believe that so-called traditional number of 51 Satipithas is correct. If that number is true, then aforesaid number of japas and worship items would have been 51; but from ages these have been traditionally followed as 108 and not 51. We know that after destruction of Daksha-yagya Vishnu saved the world by gradually cutting Sati's dead body piece by piece with the help of the Sudarshan Chakra. Number of holy Shaktipithas (places where some sacred piece of divine Sati's dead body fell) is 108 and not 51. However, in various old Tantra scriptures e.g. *Hevajra Tantra*, *Kalika Purana*, *Gupta-Chinacharakrama*, *Kularnava Tantra*, *Rudrayamala*, *Kubjika Tantra*, *Jnanarnava Tantra*, *Tantra Chuhramani*, *Pithanirnaya*, *Shivacharita*, *Tantrasara*, *Pranatoshani Tantra*, *Pithamala*, etc. the number of Satipithas is not consistent but variable. If there are really only 51 Satipithas, then the number would have been consistent as 51; but that is not the case. Thus, it is noticed that there are more dissimilarities than similarities regarding number of Satipithas in different Tantrik sources – this fact is elaborated as below:

Tantrik Sources	**Number of Satipithas**	**Tantrik Sources**	**Number of Satipithas**
Hevajra Tantra	4	Tantra Chuhramani	50
Kalika Purana	7	Shaktanada Tarangini	50
Chandimangala of Mukundaram	9	Tantrasara	51
Rudrayamala	10	Pithanirnaya	51
Kularnava Tantra	18	Pranatoshani	51
Ashtadashipitham	18	Pithamala	51
Kubjika Tantra	42	Shivacharita	77 (with Upapith)
Jnanarnava	50		

In the aforesaid Tantrik sources, there is not only difference in the number of Satipithas, but also there is discrepancy in the names of the presiding Devis and presiding Devatas. In addition, inconsistency in the determination of sites of Satipithas is also quite prominent. As a result of these numerous differences, in most of the cases, there is much more discrepancies than consistencies. If we discuss this issue in more detail, the list will be very long; but there is no need for it.

Satipithas in *Pithanirnaya Tantra* and *Shivacharita*

Let us discuss *Pithanirnaya* and *Shivacharita*, because from these two sources, the traditional idea of 51 pithas has been followed by *Pranatoshani Tantra*, *Annadamangala*, *Pithamala Tantra*, and other works.

For example, following is described in *Pithanirnaya* in connection with the falling of three eyes of Sati:

> *"Karavire trinetram me devi mahishamarddini*
> *Krodhisho bhairavastatra ...."*
>
> – "Three eyes of Sati fell in Karavira; Devi is Mahishamardini and Deva is Krodhisha."

But in *Shivacharita* book, in description of the same pith, instead of 'Karavira' name of 'Sharkarara' is noted.

In this connection, Bharatchandra, sincere follower of *Shivacharita*, mentioned in his *Annadamangala*:

> *"Sharkarare 'tinchakshu' triguna bivhava;*
> *Mahishamardini devi krodhisha bhairava."*
>
> – "Three eyes of Sati fell in Sharkarara; Devi is Mahishamardini and Deva is Krodhisha."

It is interesting to note that Karavira is mentioned in *KubjikaTantra*; but in *Tantra Chuhramani* name of Sharkarara is identified. A more interesting point is that neither Karavira nor Sharkarara is mentioned in *Devi Bhagavata*, *Hevajra Tantra*, *Kalikapurana*, *Kularnava*, *Rudrayamala*, *Jnanarnava*, *Shaktananda Tarangini*, etc.

The most striking feature is that until today no place in the name of either Karavira or Sharkarara is found in India, which has been so specifically indicated in the above Tantrik books as the sites where Sati's three eyes fell. Niguhrananda, writer of '*Ekannapither Sandhane*' (in search of 51 pithas) wrote in this matter: "......but, even if Sharkarara is mentioned instead of Karavirapura, situation is not changed; because we do not know where is Sharkarara. ..... I am also not confident about the existence of Karavira." Therefore, the aforesaid books could not provide proven records about the statement that Sati's three eyes fell in Karavira or Sharkarara. As a result, this statement can not be accepted as scriptural.

However, in earlier section, we have discussed this issue in detail indicating that in the *Gupta Chinacharakrama* there is a clear description with factual statements about names and glories of the sites where Sati's three eyes fell. Thus, the vague and incomplete statement in the *Pithanirnaya*, *Shivacharita*, and similar books about the places where Sati's three eyes fell is not authoritative.

In this context it is mentionable that, the upper eye is below brahmarandhra, and then further down exists the right eye and left eye. Therefore, the first Satipith among 108 Satipithas is 'Himlaj', where Sati Devi's brahmarandhra fell (now this place is situated in Pakistan). Second Satipith is Mahapith Tarapith which is situated at the bank of Dvaraka River in the Birbhum district of Bengal. Third

Satipith is Bhavanipith, situated at district of Baguhra in Bengal. Fourth Satipith is Neela Saraswati pith in Mithila. It is very noticeable that aforesaid four Satipithas spread over the entire India – from far west to far east. Sati's brahmarandhra fell in Himlaj, the centre of ancient Indus civilization of India, i.e. first Satipith among 108 Satipithas is situated in the center of this ancient civilization; this is definitely a remarkable fact. Second Satipith, Mahapith Tarapith, is in Bengal; third Satipith is in Bangladesh; fourth Satipith is in Bihar; these four Satipithas cover almost two thousand miles. Thus, the statement in *Pithanirnaya*, *Shivacharita*, *Pranatoshani*, *Tantra Chuhramani*, and other books that all three eyes of Satidevi fell in only one place – Karavira or Sharkarara is wrong; scriptural authoritative fact is that Sati's pupils of three eyes fell in three places – Bengal, Bangladesh, and Bihar.

Also, there are many inconsistencies noticed in the description of Satipithas in the *Pranatoshani Tantra*. For example, in the description of pith number twelve, it is said that Sati's left hand fell at the place in the name of Bahula at Ketugram near Katwa in the Burdwan District, Bengal; Devi is Bahula, and Bhairava is Bhiruka. In spite of this, in describing pith number forty-eight, it is mentioned that Sati's lower lip fell at this Ketugram; Devi is Bahula and Bhairava is Vishvesa. Did both left hand (pith number 12) and lower lip (pith number 48) fall at Ketugram near Katwa? Devi of these both pithas is Bahula? There are no authoritative answers to these questions in the *Pranatoshani Tantra*. Besides, in describing the pith number forty-five, there are contradictions: it is said that Sati's throat fell at Nalhati in Birbhum District, Bengal; but at the same time Kalighat is mentioned. Thus, there are many contradictory statements in the *Pranatoshani Tantra*.

We have noticed the inconsistency in the list of Satipithas in various Tantrik books. Different Satipithas are mentioned in different books. This indicates that there must be more than so called 51 Satipithas. However, more than 51 Satipithas have been also identified from other sources. This writer (Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay) of this book was successful in collecting information about 108 Satipithas and published number of 81 Satipithas from many old sadhakas and sadhikas during his journeys at various times in Himalayas and other parts in India. Particularly, this writer became absolutely certain about 108 Satipithas by coming into close contact with many saints during his participation in two Purnakumbha festivals – first in Hardwar in 1974 and the second time in Prayag in 1977.

In respect of the number of Satipithas, it is mentionable that 108 Satipithas are indicated in the old Shakta scripture *Devi Bhagavata*. But that legend of Satyayuga (Daksha yagya was performed in many thousand years ago) is according to the old customs e.g. 108 names of Shiva or 108 names of Kali or Krishna is the basis of 108 Satipithas. As a result of this, no serial description is found about the specific sites where specific parts of Sati's sacred body fell. In addition, geographical location of that ancient India and also names and identities of that old age are not in vogue at the present time. Consequently, it is impossible to know the correct names and locations of Satipithas. In support of this problem of Satipithas, a few examples from the *Devi Bhagavata* where 108 Satipithas are described are provided in tabular form:

Serial No.	Devi	Location of Satipith
10	Jayanti	Hastinapur
11	Gouri	Kanyakubja
19	Bhavani	Thaneshvar
25	Rudrani	Rudrakoti
46	Haripriya	Gangadvar
53	Sita	Chitrakut
85	Bhima	Himalaya
96	Kushodaka	Kushadvip

It is impossible to find from the above description of pithas about the sites where which part of Satidevi fell; only Satidevi alone can find it.

We have known about 108 Satipithas from the *Devi Bhagavata*; that is our only benefit. This number of 108 Satipithas is also recognized by the great seers of truth and saints of India. But it is only by sadhana one can find all Satipithas (from brahmarandhra to toes). Thus, the responsibility of finding sites of all Satipithas is ours not of the saints. Those who have undertaken this spiritual duty of finding all Satipithas; they have to perform sadhana; they have to go ahead towards the goal with strong determination; because success or siddhi is really responsibility of those who perform sadhana.

Among 108 Satipithas, so far the serial description of only 81 Satipithas has been identified; balance 27 pithas are still remained secret or hidden. It is believed that these undisclosed 27 pithas are hidden in different areas of Mahahimavanta (Himalaya) and also in places outside of India (it is known that in early part of twentieth century, famous theosophist madam Blatavotsky found indication of an ancient Satipith by the side of old trading route in Gobi desert). There are many ancient Shaktipithas in various places in north and south Himalaya, and also in Kalimath, Maikhanda, etc. in central Himalaya. Who can say that there is no Satipith among these ancient Shaktipithas? Again, there are Satipithas in Asam, Nepal, etc. of north-eastern Himalaya; likewise, there are also Satipithas in western Himalaya. In connection with these unpublished Satipithas, truth-seers saints say that one day, by the grace of Bhagavati, all of these unknown hidden Satipithas will be disclosed. For some secret reason, these Satipithas are undisclosed; that is why these are still unknown to the public. Although, by the divine grace of Bhagavati, great Indian saints are aware of these unpublished Satipithas, yet for some secret reason they are not willing to disclose these. May be, this is waiting for sadhana and siddhi of sadhakas who are dedicated in finding the hidden Satipithas.

Upapithas or Pithas of Lesser Importance

Many people identify the sites where small parts of Sati's body, dress and ornaments, necklace, crown, ear-ring, anklet set with small bells, etc. fell after disintegrated by Vishnuchakra (discus of Vishnu) as upapithas instead of Satipithas. There are descriptions of some upapithas in the *Shivacharita Tantra*. Thus, many people consider some Satipithas as upapithas; but, this is not right.

When Satidevi, Mahashakti Bhagavati Mahamaya, by revealing Her great Dasha Mahavidya form extending in all ten directions, compelled Her husband Shiva to allow Her to participate in Daksha-yagya – are not the small parts of the divine body or dress and ornaments of that Mahashakti Super-Conscious Bhagavati are also conscious, glorious, and sacred? Besides, can we compare these supremely sacred and eternally conscious and glorious dress and ornaments of Sati with the dress and ornaments of the common people? Dress and ornaments of the common people are nothing but only inert matter; there is consciousness in the body of common people, but there is no effect of it on their dress and ornaments; that human consciousness does not have the power to make inert dress and ornaments as conscious items.

Although the used items of dress and ornaments of God-Seers and conscious saints are inert, still these are charged with consciousness; seeing and touching of these used items make the mind and body purified, and give the feeling of consciousness. Therefore, used items of Avataras (incarnation of God) like Lord Buddha, Chaitanya, Nanak, Sri Sri Ramkrishna, Sri Sri Bamakyapa, etc. are maintained with great care; and in some instances these are even worshipped daily; because these inert items (dress and ornaments, slipper, etc.) also had become mostly conscious due to contact with the divine body of super-conscious saints who are fortunate enough to receive grace of Brahma-Shakti; due to super-power and glory of consciousness even in inert items consciousness was naturally produced.

If the used items of saints due to contact had become conscious and purified due to contact with their bodies and by being worshipped daily; then, are not small parts of the divine body and dress and ornaments of primordial Mahashakti, Super-Conscious, Queen of the universe, creator-preserver-destroyer of the world, Universal Mother Bhagavati imbued with ever consciousness? Small parts of the body of Sati are also divine body of Sati; besides, is it possible to separate eternally conscious and sacred ornaments from the divine body of Mahashakti, Maha Sati Bhagavati? Whose little favor can bring fulfillment of the sadhana spreading over many births of sadhak and he can attain consciousness; is it fair to segregate a portion of that savior of three worlds, supreme-conscious, super-glorious Bhagavati's body, dress and ornaments from the sacred status of pith into a lower status upapith? This is an entirely immoral task for the common people.

Different limbs and appendages of the divine body of Mahashakti Satidevi are as a whole integral form of Sati's body; that divine body can not be segregated into superior and inferior; even a small portion of the body is complementary to the big part. As Satidevi is eternally conscious, Her whole divine body is also full of consciousness; Her divine dress and ornaments are also conscious. Thus, being children of eternal, forever, Supreme Prakriti, and Universal Mother Bhagavati; it is very sinful to judge Her divine power and supreme conscious power as big and superior or small and inferior. Being Her children, it is not at all moral to consider and segregate some part of mother's body as superior and some part as inferior, and to judge divine dress and ornaments of mother's body as inferior; we, the children are Her own eternal part. Thus, quite understandably, super-power and super-conscious Bhagavati's different limbs and appendages of the body, dress and ornaments - everything is equally respectable as 'pith'. Upapith has no separate existence; 'pith' should be only 'pith' without any division.

Precious ear ring of Satidevi fell in great religious center Mahapith Kashi; do you want to call Mahapith Kashi an upapith? Again, necklace of Satidevi fell at Nandikeshvari in Sainthia; can it be identified as an upapith? No – all are respectable as 'pith' or Mahapith. Thus, it is reasonable that so called many upapithas of the *Shivacharita* have been included in *Pithanirnaya* or '*Mahapith Nirupan*'.

Description of 81 Satipithas

We have indicated before that 81 Satipithas have been disclosed among 108 Satipithas. These 81 Satipithas are now serially described:

1. Himlaj

The brahmarandhra of Satidevi fell here. This Mahapith is situated at the end of a desert, 110 miles away from Karachi in Pakistan. Here glow is always visible in the cave. Devi – Kottai, Bhairava – Bhimalochana.

For ages, in this conscious Shaktipith many sadhakas and sadhikas attained siddhi by performing religious austerities. It is said that in Satyayuga Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra came to visit Satipith Himlaj.

2. Mahapith Tarapith

The pupil of the upper eye (third eye) of Satidevi fell here. This Mahapith is situated at the bank of Dvaraka River in the village Chandipur of Birbhum, Bengal. Devi – Ugra-Tara, Bhairava – Chandrachuhra.

This Satipith resides over a vast and ancient great cremation-ground. From Satyayuga to this present time, many thousand sadhakas and sadhikas attained siddhi in this ever conscious Mahapith; the greatest among them is Parama Purusha Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. A great worshipping of Tara is celebrated on the fourteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight (shukla) during the month of Ashvin (September – October). Besides, many other festivals like Shiva-Ratri, Ratha-Yatra (chariot riding ceremony), etc. are celebrated here with great pomp and splendor.

It is said that in addition to Sati's pupil of the upper eye, some part of Sati's thigh also fell at the same time in this super-sacred site i.e. two parts of Sati's body fell at the same place. This is supported by some high level saints. However, no authoritative proof has yet been obtained.

3. Bhavani Tarapith

The pupil of the right eye of Satidevi fell here. This Satipith is situated at the bank of Karatoya River near Chandaikona at Bhavanipur in Baguhra District of Bangladesh. Trip to this Satipith can be made by traveling from Goalanda to Sirajganja by steamer, and from there traveling another sixteen miles to the site. Devi – Aparna, Bhairava – Ruru.

King of Natore and great sadhak Ramkrishna attained here grace of Devi by performing religious austerity for a long time. He used to address Devi Aparna as "Ma Bhavani"; following this tradition in course of time all sadhakas and devotees also address Devi as 'Ma Bhavani; because of this, Devi Aparna is now called 'Bhavani' and this Satipith is known as Bhavanipur. Many sadhakas and sadhikas attained siddhi by performing religious austerity here; among them, distinguished names are: Manohar Chakravarty, Bhavani Thakur, Haranandaswami, Khaki Baba, Gopal Brahmachari, etc. Great festivals are celebrated here in Dipanvita and Ramanavami on Saturday and Tuesday of the month of Baishakh (April – May).

4. Neel Saraswati Tarapith

The pupil of the left eye of Satidevi fell in this sacred place. This Satipith is situated near Rajgir in the eastern side of Triyugi River in Mithila. In this conscious site, Neel Saraswati Tarama can be visualized with performance of little religious austerity. Devi – Neel or Neel Saraswati.

5. Bakreshvar

The eyebrow center of Satidevi fell here. This famous Satipith is situated at seven miles from Duvrajpur station in the Birbhum District. Devi – Mahishmardini, Bhairava – Bakranatha.

Great sage Ashtabakra attained siddhi in this place. Also, saints like Nityananda Mahaprabhu, Khaki Baba, Aghorii Baba, Chakravarty Baba, Guha Baba, etc. performed here religious austerity. There is an ancient and grand cremation-ground in the south-eastern side of Bakreshvar temple. There is a legend that nine million Shivas reside in this Shiva-Shakti pith. A grand festival is celebrated in Shiva-Ratri. Hot spring of Bakreshvar is very famous in India as infallible medicines for many serious diseases.

6. Karnat

Ears of Satidevi fell at Karnat in Tamil Nadu. Devi – Jayadurga, Bhairava – Abhiruk.

7. Varanasi

Ear rings of Satidevi fell in this great holy place. The area where these ear rings fell is called Manikarnika. This India-famous and supremely sacred and majestic cremation ground Manikarnika is situated in western side of the north-bound river Ganges. Varanasi, the auspicious place of Shiva, is famous as the oldest city of the world. Throughout the ages many incarnations of God (avataras) and great spiritual giants like Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Budhhadev, Mahavir, Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Chaitanyadev, Kavir, Trailangaswami, Shyamacharan Lahiri, Sri Ramkrishna, Bhaskarananda, Vishudhhananda Giri, Sri Bamakhyapa, etc. visited this holy place. Thus, Kashi is the grand meeting place of all Indian religions. This greatest sacred place of Kashi Vishvanatha is famous as field of majestic activities of Shiva's wife Annapurna. Devi – Vishalakshi, Bhairava – Kalamadhava.

8. Sugandha

The nose of Satidevi fell here. This sacred place is situated at Shikarpur village, ten miles north of Barisal District of Bangladesh. Devi – Sunanda, Bhairava – Tryambak.

9. Gandaki

The right side cheek of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Gandaki Chandi, Bhairava – Chakrapani.

10. Godavari

The left side cheek of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Vishvamatrika, Bhairava – Dandapani.

11. Nalasthala

Satidevi's part of right side cheek fell here. Devi – Bhramari, Bhairava – Virupaksha.

12. Uttara

Satidevi's part of left side cheek fell here. Devi – Uttarini, Bhairava – Utsasan.

13. Bhairavaparvat

The upper lip of Satidevi fell here. This is situated by the side of river Shipra in Avantidesh (near Ujjvayini). Devi – Avanti. Bhairava – Lambakarna.

14. Shuchidesh

Part of upper teeth of Satidevi fell here. This is situated near Ishvaripur under Khulna District of Bangladesh. Devi – Narayani, Bhairava – Samhar.

15. Panchasagar

Part of lower teeth of Satidevi fell here. This is situated in Mayurbhanja District of Orissa. Devi – Varahi, Bhairava – Maharudra.

16. Khageshvar

Teeth of Satidevi fell here. This is situated in Phulbehria village, about four miles west of Dubrajpur under district of Birbhum. Devi Danteshvari's temple is located by the side of Dantan pond near large temple of Khageshvar Shiva. Many sadhakas and sadhikas were enlightened in this very old pith. Devi – Danteshvari, Bhairava – Khageshvara.

17. Jvalamukhi

The tongue of Satidevi fell here. This is situated near Hoshiarpur in Punjab. Devi – Ambika, Bhairava – Unmatta. Grand festival is celebrated here in Navaratri. Throughout the ages many great aspirants got spiritual enlightenment in this ever living pith. Some mentionable names among them are: Krishnanandasvami, Matangamayi etc.

18. Lavpur

The lower lip of Satidevi fell here. This is situated at Lavpur village near Bolepur in the Birbhum district of Bengal. A huge stone image in the form of lower lip is gracefully present here. Devi – Phullara, Bhairava – Vide. A special heritage of Tantrik system has been prevalent here from ages. Many received Devi's grace and audience by performing sadhana in this pith. Grand worship and majestic festival are arranged here in full-Moon day of the month of Magh (January - February).

19. Attahas

The jaw of Satidevi fell here. This ancient Satipith is situated at south Dihi village under Ketugram police station in Burdwan district of Bengal. Devi – Mahadevi Chamunda, Bhairava – Buhroshiva (old Shiva). This Satipith is distinctly identified as special place of Tantrik sadhana. Many sadhakas received enlightenment by performing sadhana in this quiet and conscious Satipith.

20. Janasthan

The chin of Satidevi fell here. This Satipith is situated in Khandesh or Madhya Pradesh. Devi – Bhramayi, Bhairava – Bikritaksha.

21. Vrindavan

Hair of Satidevi fell here. This Satipith is situated near Umavan of Vrindavan. Devi – Uma, Bhairava – Bhutesha.

22. Srihatta or Sylhet

The neck of Satidevi fell here. This Satipith is situated at Jainpur, fifteen miles away from the city of Srihatta in Bangladesh. A fair is celebrated during Shivaratri (auspicious night in a year when special worship of Shiva is performed) and Ashokastami. Devi – Mahalakshmi, Bhairava – Samvavananda.

23. Srishaila

Part of neck of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Sarveshvari, Bhairava – Chatitananda.

24. Kiriteshvari

The crown of Satidevi fell here. This Satipith is situated by the side of river Ganges near Varanagar at the district of Murshidavad in Bengal. Devi – Vimala, Bhairava – Samvartta.

25. Kashmir

The throat of Satidevi fell here. This Satipith is situated about ninety miles away from Srinagar. Shankaracharya and afterwards many sadhakas received grace of Devi. This ancient pith is renowned as Sharadapith. A fair is celebrated here in Navaratri duering Durga puja. Devi – Saraswati or Mahamaya, Bhairava – Trisandheshvara (Amarnath according to another view).

26. Ayodhya

The necklace of Satidevi fell in this very sacred holy place. Devi – Annapurna, Bhairava – Harihara.

27. Nandipur

The part of necklace of Satidevi fell at the root of a very old tree at Nandipur near Sainthia station in Birbhum district of Bengal. Devi – Nandini, Bhairava – Nandikeshvar. Many sadhakas and sadhikas received grace of Devi by performing sadhana in this Shaktipith. This Satipith is situated under a very old banyan tree.

28. Nalhati

The tubular bone (hands or legs) of Satidevi fell here. This pith is situated on a small rocky place two miles away from Nalhati station in Birbhum district of Bengal. Devi – Kalika, Bhairava – Yogesh; but Devi is renowned here as "Lalateshvari".

29. Ratnavali

The right shoulder of Satidevi fell at Ratnavali in Tamil Nadu. Devi – Kumari, Bhairava – Shiva.

30. Vrindavan

Piece of right shoulder of Satidevi fell at Vrindavan. Devi – Katyayani, Bhairava – Kumar.

31. Mithila

The left shoulder of Satidevi fell at Mithila in Bihar. Devi – Mahadevi, Bhairava – Mahodaya.

32. Kalaghat

The head of Satidevi fell at Juranpur village near Katoya under district of Burdwan of Bengal. Devi – Jayadurga, Bhairava – Krodhisha. This place is famous as "Kalaghat".

33. Vaidyanath

The heart of Satidevi fell here. This land of Shiva in Bihar is famous in India. Self-born Shivalinga (famous pillar symbol of Shiva) Vaidyanath gracefully present here. Worshipping has to be performed here after taking bath in the Shiva-Ganges. Devi – Jayadurga, Bhairava – Vaidyanath.

34. Prabhaskhanda

The core of the heart of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Siddheshvari, Bhairava – Siddheshvar.

35. Ramgiri

The right breast of Satidevi fell here. This Ramgiri is situated five miles away from Bilaspur station in Madhyapradesh. Devi – Shivani, Bhairava – Chanda.

36. Kangra

The left breast of Satidevi fell here (according to some other view, it fell about one mile away from Jalandhar). This pith is situated twenty miles away from Jvalamukhi in Punjab. Great fair is celebrated here during Navaratri. Devi – Tripura Malini, Bhairava – Bhishan; but Devi is worshipped here as "Vrajeshvari".

37. Tihahri Gahroal

The chest of Satidevi fell here. This Satipith is situated on a high hill in a lonely and dense forest between Devprayag and Tihahri Gahroal of Himalayas. Devi is known as Chandravadani; because of this reason the name of this holy hill is also called Chandravadani hill.

For a long time, arrangement of daily worship had been maintained by the dynasty of king of Tihahri. There is a hearsay that world-teacher Shankaracharya visited this place to pay homage to Devi. Swami Akhandananda, one of the dear disciples of the divine incarnation of the age Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsadeva, visited Devi Chandravadani in 1887 on his way from Gangotri to Kedar during his trip to Himalaya. He spent two days with great pleasure in this supremely holy Satipith, located at the top of the high mountain and filled with the divine beauty.

38. Manas Sarovar

The right hand of Satidevi fell in the Manas Sarovar. Devi – Dakshayani, Bhairava – Amar. Manas Sarovar is under Tibbet. This supremely holy and ocean-like Manas Sarovar is located about sixteen thousand feet high from the sea-bank; this is also world famous as largest and most high lake in the Earth.

39. Bahula

The left hand of Satidevi fell here. This pith is situated at the Ketugram village in the district of Burdwan of Bengal. Devi – Bahula, Bhairava – Bhiruk.

40. Chattal

Half of right hand of Satidevi fell here. Chattal is same as Chattagram of Bangladesh. This Satipith is situated at Sitakunda on Chandranath hill. Devi – Bhavani, Bhairava – Chandrashekhar. There is a saying that Mahadeva said "In Kaliyuga I always gracefully present in the Chandranath hill".

41. Ranakhanda

The right elbow of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Vahulakshmi, Bhairava – Mahakala.

42. Ujani

The left elbow of Satidevi fell at Ujani or Kogram in Burdwan district of Bengal. Devi – Mangal Chandi, Bhairava – Kapileshvar.

43. Manived

The right wrist of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Savitri, Bhairava – Sthanu.

44. Pushkar

The left wrist of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Gayatri, Bhairava – Sarvananda. As a source of divine river Narmada, Pushkar is a great holy place.

45. Prayag

Two fingers of two hands of Satidevi fell in Prayag which is famous as king of holy places. Devi – Lalita, Bhairava – Bhava. This supremely holy pith is situated at half a mile away from Triveni ghat (a landing stage at the bank of a river) of holy Prayag. Triveni is famous as a meeting-place of three holy rivers – Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati. In this holy place it is customary to visit Venimadhav, shaving of head, and to perform sraddha ceremony (an act of offering items with great respect in the name of ancestors.)

Famous Kumbha fair is celebrated in this king of holy places Prayag. During the one and half month long period (December - January) of fair, five great bath ceremonies are performed one after another. In this holy occasion grand meeting of all members of Dashanami society (representing all Hindu religious sects of India) is performed. In no other part of world magnificent religious fair of this scale is performed.

46. Bohral

The left side crown of head of Satidevi fell at the very old Bohral village in south suburb of Kolkata. Devi – Tripurasundari, Bhairava – Tripurasundar.

Lots of archaeological achievements of the old Hindu era had been found in this ancient holy place. About one thousand year old four-armed "Tara image" made of black stone and "Kali image" made of clay were recovered from the big pond by the side of temple of Devi and also by digging nearby areas. These two divine images were reclaimed under the inspiration received in a dream. Many sadhakas and sadhikas had been enlightened in this ever conscious ancient Tantrik pith. Some very distinguished names among them are: famous Tantrik Swami Shiva Chaitanya, Harananda Swami, etc.
Image of Tripurasundari for meditation is "Shohrashi", the third Vidya of Dasha Mahavidyas. Devi is called Tripurasundari because She is the queen of all three places (tripura) – upper-world, world, and the under-world. Devi is in very conscious state. Even today Her divine-play is continued.

47. Satichal

Part of hand of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Sunandaa, Bhairava – Sunanda.

48. Yashore

Lotus hand of Satidevi fell in this ancient holy place. Old name of Yashore is Ishvaripur. This is situated sixty miles east of Kolkata and is part of Bangladesh. Devi – Yashoreshvari, Bhairava – Chanda.

49. Prabhas

The belly of Satidevi fell in this grand holy place. This ancient Prabhas is same as Somenath in Kathiyavahr of Western India. Devi – Chandrabhaga, Bhairava – Vakratunda.

50. Neelachal

Uchchhishta (leaving of food after eating) of Satidevi fell in this holy place. This Neelachal or place of Viraja is situated in old Jajipur or Katak. Devi – Vimala, Bhairava – Jagannatha. Here, the indifference between Shyam and Shyama is noticeable. Bhairava of Shyama is Sri Vishnu Jagannatha himself.

51. Haridwar

The stomach of Satidevi fell in this very sacred and ancient place. This is the famous place where Daksha-yagya was performed and Sati sacrificed Her life. Here in every twelve years full Kumbha fair has been celebrated. Devi – Bhairavi, Bhairava – Chakra.

52. Utkal

The navel of Satidevi fell at the north-west end of Jagannath temple in Puri or Utkal. Devi – Vimala, Bhairava – Jagannatha. Here also the indifference between Shyam and Shyama is prevalent. In this India famous Vaishnava site and also Satipith, Bhairava of Shyama is Shyamsundara; because of this reason, this divine place is distinctly marked as a grand meeting place of all Indian religious sects including Shakta, Shaiva, Vaishnava, etc.

53. Kanyashram

The back of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Sarvani, Bhairava – Nimish. It is known that this pith is situated at Kumarikunda in Chattagram of Bangladesh.

54. Shriparvat

Flesh from back of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Shrisundari, Bhairava – Sundaran. Shriparvat is situated near Ladak below Hindukush mountain under Kashmir.

55. Gaurishekhar

Fat from the body of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Yogadya, Bhairava – Bhim. This Satipith is situated on the Gaurishekhar hill of Asam.

56. Knoke

The abdomen of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Knokeshvari, Bhairava – Knokeshvar. This Satipith is situated in Varahachchhatra of Nepal.

57. Sarvasainya

Part of abdomen of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Vishvamata, Bhairava – Dandapani.

58. Shonnada

The right hip of Satidevi fell in Shonnada or Narmada river. Devi – Narmada, Bhairava – Bhadrasen.

59. Kalmadhav

The left hip of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Kali, Bhairava – Asitanga.

60. Kamakhya

"Yoni" (Vagina) or "Mahamudra" of Devi fell at Kamakhya hill near Gauhati of Kamrup or Assam. Throughout the ages, innumerable sadhakas and sadhikas received grace of Devi Kamakya by performing sadhana in this ancient and majestic pith. This grand pith is especially famous as one of the best Tantrik pithas of India. During Amvuvachi a great festival is celebrated here. Devi – Kamakhya, Bhairava – Umananda.

61. Nepal

The anus of Satidevi fell near Pashupatinath temple of Nepal. Devi – Guhyeshvari, Bhairava – Pashupatinatha.

62. Magadh

The right (ham) back of the thigh of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Sarvanandakari, Bhairava – Vyomkesh.

63. Jayanti

The left (ham) back of the thigh of Satidevi fell in Jayanti. Devi – Jayanti, Bhairava – Kramadishvara. This Jayanti pith is situated at the southern foot of Khasia hill in Jayantia division of Shrihatta (Sylhet).

64. Srota

The right knee of Satidevi fell here. Devi –Chandika, Bhairava – Sadananda.

65. Malav

The left knee of Satidevi fell here. Devi –Shubhachandi, Bhairava – Tamra.

66. Kurukshetra

The ankle of the right leg of Satidevi fell here. Devi –Savitri, Bhairava – Sthan or Ashvanatha. The glory of this sacred place is famous in India. This is the battlefield where war for seeking justice as described in the epic *Mahabharata* was held.

67. Vibhas

The ankle of the left leg of Satidevi fell at Vibhas in Tamluk of Bengal. Devi – Bhimrupa, Bhairava – Sarvananda.

68. Tripura

The right foot of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Tripurasundari, Bhairava – Abhiruk (Tripuresh in some other view). This old pith is situated at Udaipur in Tripura.

69. Tristrota

The left foot of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Bhramari, Bhairava – Ambar. This Satipith is situated at Shalvahri village in Vodri subdivision under Jalpaiguri district of Bengal.

70. Majestic Holy Place Kalighat

Four fingers of right foot of Satidevi fell in this very old and illustrious place of goddess Kali. This majestic place is situated in the south part of Kolkata. Devi – Kalika, Bhairava – Nakuleshvara. For ages, many distinguished sadhakas and sadhikas visited this world famous super Tantrik pith and received the boundless grace of Kalika Devi. This tradition is very much continuing even today.

71. Kshirgram

The thumb of right foot of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Yogadya, Bhairava – Kshirkhandak. This Satipith is situated at ten miles north of Burdwan station in Bengal. In every year during Vaishakh (April - May) Samkranti (last day of Bengali month) Devi Yogadya is lifted up from the pond, and after worshipping Devi goes back again to the pond to stay there for another year. This is the only Satipith in India where Devi stays under water throughout the year.

72. Virat

Fingers of left foot of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Amvika, Bhairava – Amritaksha.

73. Kalipith

Part of head of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Chandikeshvari, Bhairava – Chandikeshvara.

74. Katak

Part of skin of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Katakeshvari, Bhairava – Bamdeva.

75. Pundav

Body hair of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Sarvakshini, Bhairava – Sarva. This Satipith is situated at Mahasthan in Baguhra district of Bangladesh.

76. Tailanga

Part of body hair of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Chandanayika, Bhairava – Chandesh.

77. Shvetavandho

Part of body of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Jaya, Bhairava – Mahabhim.

78. Kankali

Skeleton of Satidevi's body fell at the bank of Kopai river about four miles away from Bolepur station under Birbhum district of Bengal. Devi – Vedgarbha, Bhairava – Ruru. There is a pond here. In this old pith many sadhakas and sadhikas received vision and grace of Devi by performing sadhana.

79. Samhar

Part of teeth of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Sureshi, Bhairava – Suresh.

80. Chandidip

Weapons of Satidevi fell here. Devi – Chakradharini, Bhairava – Shulapani.

81. Sri Lanka

Ankle set with small bells (nupur) of Satidevi fell in Sri Lanka island. In prehistoric time Lord Indra performed here sadhana. Devi – Indrakshi, Bhairava – Rakshaseshvara.

We have discussed 81 out of 108 Satipithas which have been discovered so far. Remaining 27 pithas are still hidden in different parts of Himalayas and Indian sub-continent. In due course of time these will be revealed by the grace of Bhagavati. As this is expected by the truth-seer rishis we should also expect the same.

India and Satipithas

In Satyayug all the places where pieces of divine body of Sati fell were parts of greater India. This greater India (Maha-Bharatvarsha) was extended to entire Himalayas and also beyond Himalayas to Bauddhakshetra (Buddha means knowledgeable) i.e. Jnanakshetra (Tibbet). The area of this greater India was stretched out from "Mahahimavanta" (divine Himalayas) in the north to Sri Lanka in the south, to Brahmadesh (Burma) in the east, and to Gandhardesh (Kandahar) in the west; besides, there were many other friendly and dependent countries, e.g. Chandravatipur (Peking), Mishradesh (Egypt), Varahipur (Siberia), Chandradvip (Japan), Ilavritavarsha (Sumeru area), etc. But today, from political point of view, that greater India is divided into small pieces of many countries. As a result of this division, besides India many Satipithas are located in the following five foreign countries: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Tibbet, and Sri Lanka; however, most of the discovered Satipithas are mainly situated in India.

Bengal and Satipithas

Out of all Satipithas in India, most of them are located in main centre of Tantra i.e. Bengal. Among 81 disclosed Satipithas, 27 (one-third) are located in old Bengal [East Bengal (now Bangladesh), West Bengal (now Bengal), North Bengal, South Bengal, and mountainous Tripura – together constituted entire old Bengal]. Following is the list of these 27 Satipithas with information about specific parts or ornaments of divine body of Sati:

1. Pupil of the top eye (Tarapith)
2. Pupil of the right eye (Bhavani Tarapith)
3. The eyebrow center (Bakreshvar)
4. Nose (Shikarpur)
5. Part of upper teeth (near Ishvaripur)
6. Teeth (Khageshvar)
7. Lower lip (Labhpur)
8. Jaw (Attahas)
9. Neck (Jainpur)
10. Crown (Varanagar)
11. Part of necklace (Nandipur)
12. Tubular bone (Nalhati)
13. Head (Juranpur)

14. Left hand (Ketugram)
15. Half of right hand (Sitakunda)
16. Left elbow (Kogram)
17. Left side crown of head (Vodal)
18. Lotus hand (Yashore)
19. Back (Kumarikunda)
20. Left ham (Baurbhag Gram)
21. Ankle of left leg (Tamluk)
22. Right foot (Tripura)
23. Left foot (Shalvari Gram)
24. Four fingers of right foot (Kalighat)
25. Thumb of right foot (Kshirgram)
26. Body hair (Mahasthan)
27. Skeleton (Kopai)

Thus, in India, Tantra is most prevalent in Bengal i.e. main center of Shakti sadhana is Bengal. Worship and sadhana of Devi Durga or Mahashakti Mother Kali is mostly performed in this state of Bengal. Hence ever presiding Devi in the hearts of Bengalis is Kalika Devi. Thus the credibility of great saying – "*Kalika Bangadeshe*" (Kalika is in Bengal) is existent everywhere in Bengal. The tradition of 27 Satipithas is boundless. Even today, Bengalis residing in states outside of Bengal and in different countries outside India express their respect to Mahashakti by establishing Kali temple or Durga temple and performing daily worship and ritualistic activities.

The influence of Mahashakti Durga or Kali is overwhelming in this "Ba" island or Bengal which is the icon of Shakti-sadhana in triangular form. Similarly, sacred river Goddess Ganges flowing from divine upper Himalayas like a stream softened with compassion, encircling with two hands and carrying this Bengal under Her lap, runs into Ganga-sagar (the confluence of the Ganges and the Bay of Bengal) with great joy. This divine Bhagavati Ganges flowing at the same time in Bengal (old name is West Bengal) and Bangladesh (old name is East Bengal) as Ganga and Padva respectively meet at this prime holy place of Bengal, Gangasagar. This Gangasagar is the only holy place at sea in Bengal and also in India. Thus, in all ages this is regarded as the supreme holy place of salvation to all Indians.

Bengal and Bengalis are minions of Mahashakti Devi Durga or Kali or Bhagavati Ganges. Thus throughout all ages in the world of Indian spiritualism, in the history of Shakti sadhana, in the tradition of Tantra sadhana, the foremost place had been always reserved for Bengalis. Almost all renowned Tantrik sadhakas of India are from Bengal. This is really a significant matter.

India's famous super Tantrik sadhakas like Krishnananda Agamvagish, Brahmanandagiri, Sarvananda Thakur, Raja Ramkrishna, Ramprasad, Kamalakanta, Sri Ramkrishna Paramhamsa, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, Aghori Baba, Tarakhyapa, Nigamananda, etc were born in Bengal. Today, Bengalis and Indians are gradually forgetting this supreme tradition. This has contributed a severe downfall of all aspects of nationalistic feeling. Indians can regain their historic super power position and glory by proper sadhana of this Mahashakti.

Birbhum and Satipithas

It is mentionable that ancient Birbhum of Bengal is the only district in Bengal or India where 8 Satipithas are located. Thus, sacred Birbhum possesses this rare distinction. As Bengal has most of Satipithas among all states in India, similarly out of all Indian districts maximum Satipithas are located in Birbhum district. Forget about district, there are many states in India where not even a single Satipith is situated. Thus, throughout all ages this unparallel spiritual-based and glorious Birbhum district has been distinctly identified as a golden chapter in the history of Indian Shakti sadhana. Birbhum, place of synthesis of different creeds, along with many glorious traditions is also associated with the greatest and unequalled pride of these Satipithas.

Following is the list of 8 Satipithas located in Birbhum with information about specific parts or ornaments of divine body of Sati:

1. Pupil of the top eye (Tarapith)
2. The eyebrow center (Bakreshvar)
3. Tubular bone (Nalhati)
4. Part of necklace (Nandipur)
5. Teeth (Khageshvar)
6. Lower lip (Labhpur)
7. Skeleton (Kankalitala)
8. Crown (Kiriteshvari)

In the middle of nineteen century, to facilitate administration of the British Government, Kiriteshvari was included into Murshidavad district. From that time onwards, this holy Satipith located at the Vahranagar village has been part of Murshidavad district.

This holy Birbhum, possessor of many majestic traditions, is also specifically proud because of the fact that first Satipith of modern free India, Mahapith Tarapith, is situated in this district. Judging from the point of view of the ancient India, first Satipith is Himlaj, which is now situated in different country Pakistan; and second Satipith is Mahapith Tarapith. Therefore, at the present time, first Satipith in whole India is this Mahapith Tarapith of Birbhum. Thus, glory of Birbhum is unparallel. Although we have given more importance to the location of ancient Satipithas, and accordingly all counting has been performed, yet this enormously glorious form of Birbhum due to its magnificent spiritual wealth has remained unfaded throughout the ages by holding within her heart all traditions of Indian thoughts and sadhanas. Thus, this holy Birbhum, great place where 8 Satipithas are situated, is in all respects ever-memorable, ever-adorable, and worthy to always receive our obeisance.

1.8 Tarapith in All Ages

Eternal Tarapith and Chandipur

Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali – in all these four ages, from age after age, there is no limit as how many different forms have been going through multifarious transformations with a stream of delightful diversity. This limitless and joyful variety is one of the sweet sporting lilas of the cheerful Mother Tara. Sweet enjoyment of fresh and multicolored varieties is a rhythmic act of Her eternal play. That is why for ages, universal Mother or presiding deity of Tarapith and playful Mother Tara has transformed again and again Her divine and eternal playground Mahapith Tarapith. This flow of transformation has been maintaining even today.

This place is also known as Chandipur because Mother Tara resides here in the form of Bhagavati Chandi. It is said in the *Gupta Chinachara Tantra*:

> *"Pratyaksham sarvayugehasmin chandika sthiti sarvada."*
>
> – "Presence of Chandidevi is felt here in every age."

Thus, name of this very sacred place is Chandipur. For many ages, this Chandipur is gracefully existed as a very pleasant and holy place. Since pupil of top eye of Satidevi fell here in Satya Yuga (age), this super pith (Mahapith) is renowned as Tarapith. Today, Chandipur or Tarapur is world-famous by this specific name "Tarapith".

Tarapith – the Hermitage (Tapovana)

There are many proofs that this Chandipur or Tarapith was initially a hermitage (tapovana) and this place was used by sages and rishis for religious austerities. Hermitage means the forest used for asceticism.

This hermitage is distinctly identified as a favorable combined place for residence and worship.

This place was naturally quiet, beautiful, and full of excellent natural beauty and varieties of fruits and flowers.

Ancient Indian philosophy, literature, music, and all other ingenious works were created in the hermitages which were charged with the air of Indian spiritualism. Exposition and development of all creative works like *Vedas*, *Upanishadas*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Geeta*, *Chandi*, *Bhagavata*, *Purana*, *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*, Tantra etc, and Indian Six Philosophies (Shahra-darshanas) were performed in the hermitages. Epic poet Valmiki, Vyasa, Kapila, Patanjali, and other sages created their impeccable and vast philosophies and their innumerable commentaries, literature, and Puranas etc. in this peaceful, pleasant, and divine atmosphere of hermitages. Thus, the heart of Indian Shahra-darshanas is these hermitages. Hermitages are therefore eternal pride of Indian sadhana, spiritual philosophies, and ideas.

Divine little streams and fountains were flowing by the side of these hermitages which were full of natural beauty, devoid of malice and hatred, compassionate, quiet, sacred, and pleasant. These were used for bath and drinking water by hermits, sages, and their children. In reality, these hermitages were place of mediation without any craving for earthly pleasure. For ages, India-famous rishis achieved siddhi by performing religious austerities (tapasya) in these delightful and heavenly surroundings. These hermitages in the form of nature's open and vast lap were the dearest places to them. On one hand, religious austerity, writing of scriptures, discussion and teaching to the disciples, etc. were performed; on the other hand, worshipping, religious sacrifice, daily homa (oblation of fire), etc. – all spiritual activities were also performed in these hermitages.

Rishis used to pray for the overall welfare of the country and nation. King or rulers of the states were always respectful to them. They had to feel obligated by accepting rishis as guru. In the middle of disaster in national or personal life or during natural destruction, royal families used to go to rishis for their advice and instruction. Infallible directions from these free from greed, truth-seer, spirited, and all-knowing rishis brought in numerous occasions welfare, peace, and prosperity for the country and national life.

For ages, rishis lived in quiet, delightful, and peaceful atmospheres of the hermitages. Far from the madding crowd of the cities; from jealousy, envy, mutual rivalry, and mutual killing, they were living in these divine and sacred hermitages. Quietly and secretly, they performed sadhana of the eternal, true, and immortal; and handed down to the world the knowledge of that One and Unique Brahman. Thus, throughout the ages, these hermitages were the centers of the traditional and glorious subjects like Indian spiritual power, philosophical scriptures, oblation, Yoga, mantra Tantra, literature, culture, etc. These hermitages were the creators of Indian philosophy, eternal Indian life, Indian sadhana, and splendid tradition of Veda-based Hindu civilization. Once, from these hermitages, light of divine knowledge was passed on to the submerged under darkness of misery and ignorant world inhabitants. These living symbols of enlightenment, devotion, and duty, and divinely luminous rishis eloquently addressed the world –

"Shrinvantu vishve amritasya putra
A ye dhamani divyani tastuh.
Vedahametam purusham mahantam
Adityavarnam tamasah parastat."
– [*Shvetashvatara Upanishad* II-5, III-8]

–"May the sons of Immortal and those who are placed in the heavenly home, listen to me. I know this Mighty Person, of the color of the Sun, beyond darkness."

Thus, from these great hermitages Indian sages and rishis had spread the unique and divine feeling of universal unity. Great rishis like Valmiki, Vyasa, Bharadvaja, Shandilya, Yagyavalka, Vashishtha, Vrigu. Dattatreya. Durvasa, Vishvamitra, Parashurama, Parashahra, etc. realized self identity, and after this self realization informed the world this super mantra of *"Soham tatvamasi"* (you are that supreme God). Therefore, nobility of spiritual life of hermitages is incomparable.

Tarapith is one of the possessors of this nobility. In ancient time, all the aforesaid qualities of hermitage was present in Tarapith. Vast and open natural surroundings, dense forest and the Dvaraka River, were specifically identified in the ancient time as a certainly favorable place for sadhana. Thus, Sri Vishnu Janardana sent sage Vashishthadeva from China to Tarapith hermitage for Tara sadhana. Accordingly, under the suitable place and favorable surrounding Vashishthadeva achieved siddhi. Besides, sages like Vrigu, Dattatreya, Durvasa, Parashurama, etc. also achieved siddhi in this Tarapith.

In the course of time, supremely sacred hermitage of Tarapith became gradually a great holy place for the Tara sadhana or Brahma sadhana; and for ages, traveling of sadhakas had been continuing to this pleasant and high-level sacred place. It is known from different stories that even after long time from the incidence of achievement of siddhi by Vashishthadeva, and also during the event of attainment of siddhi by the South-Indian Karnabharanam along with his family, this place was similar to a hermitage. Terribleness of horrible cremation-ground was not yet seen; because, siddha-sadhak Karnabharanam and his wife and two daughters Tara and Hara lived for a long time in this hermitage, and Tara and Hara used to pluck flowers everyday from this sacred Shimultala for the purpose of worshipping Chandrachuhra and their father's worship. Plants with abundant flowers were present around shimul tree (silk-cotton plant). One day, Tara and Hara plucked flowers near shimul tree, and while usual worshipping with flowers Mahadeva Chandrachuhra under shimul tree viewed the divine and illuminating shadow of Vashishthadeva. Thus, it has been proved from this that for a long time Tarapith was a very pleasant and peaceful hermitage.

Kavichandrapur, Mundamalinitala, and Udaypur were part of this vast hermitage. Besides, Virchandrapur, five miles from Tarapith in the south-east direction, was also associated with this hermitage. Even today, memorial signs of that place are visible. Pancha-Pandavas (famous five brothers known as Pandavas in the epic *Mahabharata*) spent some time in secret in a wonderfully quiet and delightful place in the vicinity of Virchandrapur. Five hundred years ago, Nityananda Mahaprabhu was born here. In addition, about thirty-two miles in north-west direction from Tarapith there was forest hermitage of Bhandi. This place is famous as hermitage and enlightenment place of great sage Vibhandaka.

Following the tradition of ancient time, at adjacent places to the cities in the midst of open nature, there were hermitage of sages and rishis. Even today, that sweet and sacred memory exists – in the same old and eternal path. Tarapith hermitage was the burning lamp of that specific path.

Tarapith – the City (Nagara)

It is said in the *Brihanneela Tantra*:

> *"Bakranathasya aishanyam vaidyanath purvatah*
> *Tarapithmidam kshetram nagaram bhuvi durlabham."*

> – "in the north-east direction from Bakranatha Shiva and in the eastern direction from Vaidyanath there is a city called Tarapith which is rare in the world."

It is especially noticeable here that Tarapith was not only described as a city but also given an eternal distinction by saying "rare in the world". If we investigate into the source of this rare distinction, it can be found that this Tarapith city or Tarakshetra was identified in the ancient time as the origin of Kshetrapala.

In this respect it is mentioned in "nagara" chapter in the *Skandha Purana* of the *Devi Bhagavata* that in ancient time there was a fierce fight between Devi Ugra-Tara and a terrible asura (demon) of Avantinagar. This terrible asura was infamous as Valasura. In course of fierce fight extending over a long period of time, Valasura and all of his soldiers were killed by Ugra-Tara. As a mark of celebration of winning the fight, delighted Devi Ugra-Tara and her associate Matrikas (Mothers) drank blood of asuras and started wild dancing with the severed heads of asuras. Whole world was terrified by their joyful sound. Gods became worried about the destruction of the world and sought protection from Mahadeva.

After hearing everything, Mahadeva entering into the delightful group of Matrikas in the form of a child started crying. Attracted by the crying sound from that child, Matrikas went before disguised Shiva. Looking at that divine child, Ugra-Tara's terrible form was subdued by the fountain of maternal love. A stream of nectar started flowing from the breasts of Ugra-Tara. Ugra-Tara Devi in the form of peaceful and charming lady sat in meditation with the child in Her lap and pacified the crying child by feeding with the nectar from Her breasts; the child became calm; Ugra-Tara and Matrikas also became peaceful; and three worlds also went back to normal state.

Ugra-Tara wished to grant a boon to the disguised Shiva; the child asked for the recognition of Him as a Lord Kshetrapala; Ugra-Tara granted this boon. From that day onward, worshipping of Kshetrapala had been introduced in this Tarakshetra. As an integral part of daily worshipping of Ugra-Tara, worshipping of Kshetrapala also had been established. This Tarakshetra or Tarapith was marked as the place of origin of Kshetrapala. The image of breast-feeding Mother of Taradevi at Brahma-Shila distinctly identifies the validity of this story.

In the course of time, that Avantinagar of "nagara" chapter in the *Skandha Purana* became known as rare in the world Tarakshetra or Tarapith nagara (city); this Tarapith became very famous as a city. Due to disclosure by many siddha sadhakas and because of the glory of the Mahapith of Ugra-Tara, Tarapith gradually became an attractive place. Villages were established in many parts of Tarapith.

Some proof of the city Tarapith can be noticed in the thirteenth century story of merchant Jaydatta. The following is the summary of the story: Death of merchant Jaydatta's son due to trick of Taradevi, burning of precious goods into ashes in the boat, later by the grace of Taradevi coming back of son to life and regaining precious goods in the place of ashes, vision and direction of Taradevi, construction of temple of Taradevi by the merchant Jaydatta, daily worshipping of Taradevi, and many welfare activities - suggest that Tarapith was indeed a city (nagara). If Tarapith was not a city, it could not be possible by the outsider merchant to build the big temple by assembling huge construction workers and masons, to arrange daily worshipping of Taradevi, and to perform many welfare activities for the local people. Thus, from these facts it is evident that Tarapith was a city in the thirteenth century.

Tarapith – the Majestic Cremation Ground (Maha-Shmashana)

It can be noticed that a few century after thirteenth by the grace of playful Mother Tara, Tantra-prescribed majestic cremation ground (maha-shmashana) suitable for Tantra sadhana could be found in Tarapith. In course of time the specific symptoms of maha-shmashana as described in Tantra could be visible in the Tarapith maha-shmashana. Following is the description of maha-shmashana according to *Tantrasara* (page 328):

> *"Shmashanam tatra sanchintya bhushatyam muni devaishcha bhushitam;*
>
> *Shivabhirvahumamsasthi moda mamabharastutah.*
> *Chaturddikshu shavamunda chitangarabhi bhushitam tanmadhye Bhavayeddevim yathokta dhyanayogata."*
>
> – "Sages and Gods praise that cremation ground where jackals are busy with human bones. Everywhere corpse-heads and burning funeral pyres are seen. meditate in that atmosphere as prescribed."

North-bound Dvaraka River is flowing in Tarapith; various trees like banyan tree, margosa tree, fig tree, marmelos tree, wild jambu tree, etc. exist in this maha-shmashana; besides, this place is full of corpses, jackals, dogs, and snakes; practice of daily cremation has been continuing. Unless somebody is a fearless and real devotee of Mother, nobody can perform sadhana in this Tarapith maha-shmashana.

Thus, in every age, Tarapith was exposed into new type of environment. In ancient time, it was a hermitage; next it became a city; and afterwards in modern age, it is now converted into a maha-shmashana. The cremation ground by the side of which north-bound river flows is qualified to be called maha-shmashana; example is Manikarnika maha-shmashana of Kashi where the Ganges River is north-bound. This famous maha-shmashana is a place of sadhana of thousand and thousand of siddha sadhakas and sadhikas for generations.

1.9 Sadhana and Siddhi of Vashishthadeva, Manasputra of Brahma

Once lotus-born Brahma was sitting in Brahma loka (heaven). He was busy in creation of the endless world. At that time, great sage Vashishthadeva who was manasputra (son born out of mind or fancy) of Brahma arrived to see Him. Vashishthadeva touched his father's feet. Brahma became very delighted and after blessing His son asked about the purpose of his visit. Vashishthadeva said with great respect that he wanted to perform sadhana of such learning (vidya) – acquisition of which could allow him to control all learnings, could make him knowledgeable in all subjects. He could be all-knowing and knowledgeable in Brahman at the same time. He begged father to tell him what is that knowledge of Brahman or spiritual knowledge and how he could acquire that supreme knowledge.

Creator Brahma became very happy after listening to his dear son. He said to his son that greatest Mahavidya among Dasha Mahavidyas is "Tara". Thus, Taravidya is Brahmavidya. It is She who is primordial (adibhuta) and eternal (sanatani); Knowledge about Her is the knowledge of Brahman; She is Brahman; She is form-less (nirakara) and also with form (sakara). Her real identity is very secret in the form-less state; in the state with form, Her identity is saguna Brahman that is the combination of Parama-Purusha and Parama-Prakriti. Her upper body is Prakriti, and lower body is Purusha. She is known in the world as "Tarini" because She rescued great God Mahadeva by removing poison. If you know Her, all knowledge of creation, preservation, and dissolution can be known; all-knowing is possible with realization of Her; vision and grace of Brahmamayi Tara can make somebody fully knowledgeable of Brahman. After seeing divinity of Brahman and Tara in His dear son, He bestowed

Mahavidya Taramantra and advised him to perform sadhana of this highest and greatest vidya.

In this context Brahma narrated the following mythological story to His son:

Once upon a time great God Mahadeva and Umadevi were sitting in pleasure in Kailas mountain. Shivani (wife of Shiva) Uma wanted to know from Mahadeva about the greatest place in the world for quick realization (siddhi). Hearing this Mahadeva said with pleasure that in olden age when Sati committed suicide in Daksha-Yagya as a protest to His condemnation, then He became very wild with the body of Sati. This created a possibility of destruction of the world. To save the world, God Vishnu cut the body of Sati in pieces with the Sudarshan Chakra (discus) and scattered it over the world. The pupil (mani) of upper eye of Sati fell at the root of great shalmali tree by the side of Dvaraka River. This manipith, sacred like Kashi, is the greatest pith. Mother Taradevi is gracefully present here as Ugra-Tara. By the grace of Taradevi one can achieve realization very quickly which is extremely rare in the world.

After loss of Sati, Mahadeva started performing severe austerity to regain Her. At this time, Mahadeva heard a divine message, "why are you suffering so much by performing such austerity? Go to Manipith Tarapith and perform three lakhs (300,000) japas (recitations) in accordance with virachara custom. You will be siddha." Following this advice Mahadeva arrived at the root of the white shalmali tree of Tarapith to worship stony faced Taradevi. He single mindedly performed the required japa and received the vision of Taradevi. He bowed down in obeisance with devotion to Taradevi after seeing Her both terrible and pleasant forms at the same time. This Brahmamayi Taradevi saved Him from the severe poison effect at the earliest period of creation during churning of ocean episode. Taradevi blessed Him and said, "You go back to Kailas; Sati will be regained in new form." Shiva delightfully returned to Kailas; afterwards, Sati returned to Shiva as His wife in the form of Uma.

Hearing this story from Brahma, Vashishthadeva requested blessing from his father to perform sadhana of Taradevi, and according to father's direction went to Neelachal in Kamakhya to perform severe austerity. However, even with severe austerity following customary pure way of worship for a long time, he could not receive vision of Taradevi. At the failure of sadhana, he returned to Brahma and reported about his mental agony. Brahma sent him again to Neelachal for sadhana. Again he performed severe austerity for a long time following absolutely pure way of worship; but he failed also in this time. He became very enraged and uttered a curse that nobody could achieve siddhi in the world with this Tara mantra. At this time he heard the divine message of Taradevi, "Oh great sage Vashishthadeva! You could not achieve siddhi because you did not know the right way to perform my sadhana. Go to Mahachin (great China) to learn about my sadhana."

Vashishthadeva, after listening the divine message from Taradevi, went back to father Brahma with heavy heart and narrated the whole incident. Brahma blamed Vashishthadeva for his unjust action and said, "Son, you acted very improperly. The Goddess Who is worthy of worship by Me, Sri Vishnu, Maheshvara, and other gods and goddesses, and Who is primordial and eternal; you had performed a great injustice in enraged condition by cursing the mantra of that Brahmamayi Taradevi. Therefore, it would be impossible for you to achieve siddhi with Tara mantra or Brahma mantra. In spite of this misconduct, Taradevi very graciously instructed you to learn essence of Tara sadhana from Sri Vishnu. But first you make this Tara mantra free from your curse. Surrender to the feet of Mahadeva and request His blessing for removal of the curse. After getting this mantra curse-free by the grace of Mahadeva, following instruction of Taradevi you should go to Atharvaveda recognized Buddha-Kshetra (Jnana-Kshetra). There, by the grace of Sri Vishnu your wish will be fulfilled."

Following the instruction of father Brahma, Vashishthadeva first surrendered to the feet of Mahadeva and recounted all the incidents. Great God Mahadeva graciously removed the curse of sage Vashishthadeva on the Tara mantra given by Brahma, and He made again the Tara mantra active. Henceforth, according to instruction of Taradevi, Tara sadhak Vashishthadeva went to Buddha-Kshhetra Mahachin.

Another story with respect to curse on the Tara mantra by Vashishthadeva is as follows:

In accordance with the instruction from Brahma, Vashishthadeva performed austerity for a long time at Neela mountain in the region of great Kamakhya pith. This Satipith Kamakhya is very alive. Whoever visits to pay homage to Mahamudrapith Kamakhya Devi or touches Her, he becomes free from all sins. As a result of this nobility, all sinners from the three worlds had been gradually being rescued by visiting this place; sins of all sinners had been decaying at this glorious place. Consequently, no sinner was left in the hell; the lord of justice Yama became embarrassed; he had no work to do as there was no sinner. He explained everything to Brahma. Brahma along with Yama explained again everything to great God Mahadeva.

Mahadeva came to know all incidents in meditation. Then He requested Brahma sanatani Taradevi who exixts in pancha-shunya-akasha (five boundless empty spaces or infinity) to drive away all sinners from Kamakhya; He requested also to keep this sacred place concealed. Ugra-Tara graciously acted per request. At this time, when great sage Vashishthadeva was engaged in deep sadhana of Taradevi, Ugra-Tara grabbed Vashishthadeva in Her left hand and threw away to a little distant place. Then, in a very enraged condition due to disturbance of sadhana, Vashishthadeva made the curse that Tara mantra would be unfruitful and Taradevi would be worshipped according to custom of left-handed path (religious practice in collaboration with woman) as opposed to traditional religious practice of right-handed path. At this moment he heard the divine message of going to Mahachin to learn true knowledge of Tara and appropriate religious practice from Sri Vishnu. What happened afterwards is well-known to everybody.

However, after making Tara mantra free from the curse by the grace of Mahadeva, Vashishthadeva went to Buddha-Kshetra or Jnana-Kshetra Mahachin. Buddha-Kshhetra Mahachin is Bhotachina or Tibet which is situated in the vicinity of holy Himalayas and in that old time it is quite possible that it was also a part of greater India. In Mahachin Vashishthadeva met with Sri Vishnu Janardana in the form of Lord Buddha (Lord of Knowledge); but what did he notice? Sri Vishnu Janardana surrounded by many beautiful girls was drinking wine; His eyes were reddish; by looking at this unnatural scene, strict puritan Vashishthadeva was shocked and thought, "what an immoral and uncontrolled performance by Sri Vishnu Janardana?"

At this moment he heard again the divine message:

"... Acharera paramarthohayam tarini sadhane mune,
Eta virudvacharasya mate na sou prasidati.
Yadi tasyah prasadam tvamchirenabhivanchhasi,
Etena chinacharaena tada tyam bhaja suvrata."
– [*Maha-Chinachara Tantra*]

– "Son, this is what is religious practice of Tara sadhana, and this is what is Chinachara. If there is any violation to this practice, Taradevi becomes displeased."

Hearing this divine message, Vashishthadeva with confused mind went to Sri Vishnu and made his respectful obeisance. Knower of other's mind Sri Vishnu knew all; even then, He asked Vashishthadeva, "Why have you come here?" Vashishthadeva told Him about his unsuccessful Tara sadhana, curse, and divine messages etc. Hearing all incidents, Sri Vishnu disclosed secret of Chinachara to Vashishthadeva. If Brahmamayi Tara is pure, then She is also impure; there is none other than Her; because, She is formless and also with form, attributeless and also with attributes, She is all. This integral view of Brahman is the foundation of Chinachara. This Chinachara is the integrated form of purity and impurity, morality and immorality; sacred, genuine, and mystical sadhana.

Thus, Chinachara is a very secret and occult matter. It is not easy to understand this concealed and difficult principle (tattva). Although it looks like conflicting, fundamentally this principle of Brahman is full of all-ideas and equality. As there are fruit and vegetable, sweet dish, and un-boiled rice, there are also wine, meat, and fish. Thus, in spite of difficult engagement of two opposite ideas at the same time – not involving in earthly pleasure although living in the world of enjoyment, performing sadhana according to heroic style without sexual involvement although surrounded by sexual objects, crossing over the boundary of enjoyment and renunciation – is the nature of true kaula sadhana. The prime objective of Chinachara is to converge into Mother Tara through practice of equality in everywhere, integrating into one and unique idea of infinitely idealistic Tara, and finally receiving grace and vision of Tara. This Chinachara is extremely mysterious, and except very high level sadhakas, this secret Brahma tattva can not be realized by ordinary sadhakas. Even many yogis can not really understand this difficult kaula sadhana. Reason of this difficulty is the following illustration:

> *"Bame bama ramankushala dakshine panapatra,*
> *Magrenya stam marich sahita shukarasyo mamsam.*
> *Skandhe vina lalita subhaga sadgurunam prapanchah,*
> *Kauladharma paga gahano yoginam pyagamah.*
>
> – "Person who is practicing Tara sadhana, he holds wine glass in the right hand, charming women in the left side, and hot pork with chilies in front for his food. There is also a musical vina on his shoulder. Even Yogis can not penetrate into the inner meaning of this contradictory scene."

Learning from Sri Vishnu the true principle and practice of Tara sadhana following Chinachara, great sage Vashishthadeva realized why so long he could not achieve siddhi in Tara sadhana. So long he performed Tara-sadhana following only traditional holy or pure way; but Taradevi is undivided in the form of Brahman. She is beyond restricted purity and restricted impurity; She is above morality and immorality, above enjoyment and renunciation; She is the empress of Buddha or Jnana; She is the supreme queen of knowledge. Thus, Brahmamayi Taradevi is full of all ideas. She is graciously existent in all forms – formless and with form. Whoever can visualize Tara in everything and everywhere through practice of this secret Chinachara he will achieve siddhi in Tara sadhana.

Sri Vishnu taught Chinachara to Vashishthadeva and advised him to perform Tara sadhana following this Chinachara. Vashishthadeva respectfully requested Sri Vishnu, "Please make me grateful by telling where and how to perform Tara sadhana." At this point Sri Vishnu Janardana in the form of Buddha became pleased and said:

"Dakshayani satideha tatkta mayapure yada,
Taddeham shirasa dhritva nritya kridbhagavan svayam.
Ahamtvam chakraghatena dedyaman sabhuta pura,
Taddehamsham yatra-kutra patitam bhunmahitale.
Mahapitham sa vijneyam tarapithancha tachchhrinu,
Trinetra mani patasan tritara pith murttamam.
Dvatrimshaddeva yojana madhye sthitam pith trayam;
Bisheshatah he maharshe trikonakara se vahi.
Tatra sadhyam tritarayam tapatritaya nashini."
– [*Gupta Chinachara Tantra*]

– "When Sati, daughter of Daksharaj, died at Mayapur, then Mahadeva started wild dancing holding the dead body of Sati. At this time, I cut the body of Sati in pieces by the Sudarshan discus, and wherever any piece fell every place is famous as Mahapith. Three eye-pupils (tara) of Sati fell in three locations, and due to this reason each of these three locations is called Tarapith. These three Mahapithas exist in a triangular form and each is thirty-two yojanas or 160 miles apart. If austerity and puja are performed in these three places according to the prescribed religious practices, Taradevi destroys three kinds of afflictions (material, supernatural, and spiritual) of sadhakas."

Thereafter, Vashishthadeva wanted to know from Sri Vishnu about the site where pupil of the upper (third) eye fell, and also about the glory and the rituals of puja. Sri Vishnu said:

"Bakreshvarasya aishanyam vaidyanathasta purvatah,
Dvarakayam purvabhage tatra tara adhishthita.
Shilamayiti taddevi nivasan shalmali mule,
Pratyaksham sarvayugehasmin chandka sthiti sarvada.

Tatra siddhirna sandeho divaratra muhurtte kaih,
Akasmat mantrasiddhi syadurga tara prasadatah.
Urdhanetra patenaiva ugra tara shilamayi.
Lakshatraya prajastana punaragamana nahi."
– [*Gupta Chinachara KramahTantra*]

– "In the north-east corner of Bakreshvar and east of Vaidyanath, at the root of shimul tree by the side of the Dvaraka River, pupil of upper eye of Sati fell and Bhagavati Chandi Ugra-Tara gracefully exists here all the time in the form of stone-image. Here, by the grace of Ugra-Tara, all of a sudden during the day or night, or even in a moment, mantra siddhi can be achieved. There is no doubt in it. Salvation can be granted here by three laksha (300,000) japas."

Hearing about the nobility of the place, Vashishthadeva was eager to perform Tara sadhana according to Chinachara in Mahapith Tarapith. Then he asked again Sri Vishnu about the sites where pupil of the other two eyes fell, and also about their nobility and the rules of puja.

Sri Vishnu told that pupil of the right eye fell in the west of Karatoya River (in Natore under district of Baguhra of Bangladesh). Devi is famous here as Ekajata Tara or Mahadevi Aparna and Bhairava is known as Ruru. Here one can definitely achieve siddhi by performing puja according to Tantra and reciting three laksha japas.

Pupil of the left eye of Sati fell in the east-south corner of Mithila in district of Dvarbhanga, in the north side of the Ganges River, and in east side of Triyugi River. Devi is quite well known here as Neela or Neelasaraswati. Even with little effort one can achieve siddhi in this place.

Then, following instruction of Sri Vishnu, Vashishthadeva went to Mahapith Tarapith to perform sadhana of Ugra-Tara according to Chinachara. He worshipped Taradevi in the form Brahma-Shila (stone-image) at the root of the great white shimul tree according to Chinachara with the profound respect and deep devotion. As a result of this great effort of worshipping beyond purity and impurity in accordance with Chinachara, he achieved liberation and at last was granted the vision and grace of Ugra-Tara. He was gratified by receiving a boon from Taradevi and went back to his home with great joy. In this way, after a long sadhana, with the help of mantra given by Brahma, removal of curse by the grace of Mahadeva, and following the instruction of Sri Vishnu, Vashishthadeva became siddha in Tara mantra. This is another divine lila (play) of playful Mother Tara. With combined efforts of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara, Vashishthadeva achieved siddhi in this highest and greatest Brahma mantra. *"Vashishtharadhita tara yatra tara shilamayi'* - another name of Taradevi is Tara-Shilamayi as great sage Vashishthadeva worshipped Tara. Vashishthadeva received vision, grace, and boon of Taradevi at Tarapith on the fourteenth lunar day of bright fortnight, on full Moon in the month of Ashvin (September - October). From that day onwards, for ages, there has been celebration of Tara puja in Tarapith with great pomp and splendour on this sacred day of the fourteenth lunar day of bright fortnight in Ashvin.

Second Story of Sadhana and Siddhi of Vashishthadeva in Mahapith Tarapith.

There is another story of Vashishthadeva about his sadhana and siddhi in Tarapith. In nutshell, this is described as below:

Vashishthadeva was cursed during austerity and in next life took birth in Tarapith. His Mother was Haravati, maid-servant of

Taravati who was queen of the king Chandrachuhra of Tarapith. His father was a fallen yogi of Tarapith known as Kubudva. Vashishthadeva performed austerity and achieved siddhi. But, this story is against Tantra scripture and not authoritative. In accordance with the Tantra, great sage Vashishthadeva was manasputra of Brahma and was recognized as one of the seven great sages. He was a strict devout, sadhak, very wise, and knower of Brahman. He performed great austerity for siddhi in Tara sadhana. Afterwards, with full understanding of Tara tattva and Chinachara under the instruction of Taradevi through Sri Vishnu, he achieved siddhi in Tarapith. Therefore, for a person of that great nobility, this low-grade story is completely baseless and adverse to the religious belief of Tantra. Besides, inspite of Vashishthadeva being manasputra of Brahma and one of the seven great sages, Taradevi set an example through him to show what kind of severe sadhana has to be performed for a long time to receive Her vision. Whose father was Brahma, who was great sage, maha-yogi, maha-sadhak; birth of that great Vashishthadeva could not be happened at the womb of maid-servant with father as low-level fallen yogi. Therefore, only the first episode of Vashishthadeva is true, authentic, and in accordance with scripture.

1.10 Sadhana and Siddhi of Ravindra Karnabharanam

After a long time of grand siddhi of great sage Vashishthadeva, profoundly wise and Tantrik Ravindra Karnabharanam of south India visited Mahachin with his wife for Tara sadhana. Then after some time of sadhana accompanied by his wife, Taradevi said to Karnabharanam through divine message, "You will not achieve siddhi in this China area, go to yonipith Kamakhya and practice Lata sadhana (a difficult Tantrik sadhana involving woman)."

Receiving this instruction from Taradevi, Karnabharanam accompanied by wife went to Kamakhya and engaged in Lata sadhana. But, during this sadhana, unexpectedly due to rise of great desire of sex, Karnabharanam and his wife felt guilty and decided to give up their lives. It was on the fourteenth lunar day of bright fortnight in the month of Ashvin (September – October), Mother Tara again instructed through divine message, "You will achieve siddhi by practicing this Lata sadhana. Because of your grief on account of sex desire, you will have twin daughters without any sexual union, and by these twin daughters your grief will be removed. To achieve this objective, go to Trihut under Magadh Empire and perform yagya and other religious practices including three oblations on this lunar day of full Moon. Out of three yagyas, two should be customary and one should be mental type. Following this, twin daughters originating as part of God will be born."

As instructed through the divine message of Taradevi, Karnabharanam accompanied by his wife went to Trihut (a part of Magadh), performed yagyas, three oblations, and other religious practices as instructed, and was granted with two majestic twin daughters. That place is famous as Trihut because of the performance of three oblations. With great pleasure Karnabharanam and his wife gave name to the two twin daughters as Tara and Hara. Daughters were granted by Tara, so one daughter is named as Tara; and since Tara is the reliever of distress, other daughter is named as Hara (haran means to relieve, and Hara means who relives distress).

Karnabharanam and his family spent about eight years in Trihut of Magadh. Then, following again divine message of Taradevi, Karnabharanam moved with his whole family to north-east of Bakreshvar and east of Vaidyanath in Rahr province (ancient name of the part of Bengal lying on the western bank of the Ganges) to perform Tara sadhana. However, in spite of performing sadhana in many pithas, Karnabharanam became disappointed due to failure of receiving vision of Ishtadevi (selected primary Goddess for sadhana). He performed sadhana accompanied by his wife for a long time in the Deccan, China, Kamakhya, Maghad, and Rahr province; but, even then he was not granted vision of Taradevi. Due to this un-attainment he was very aggrieved and started shedding tears. At this moment, Karnabharanam again heard the divine message of Taradevi, "You are at the end of sadhana, but your wife will be granted siddhi before you. There is no need to perform sadhana in Mahapithas in Rahr province. There is one un-revealed Mahapith in Rahr province which will be definitely exposed through you. There are asanas (seats to perform sadhana) on five skulls (pancha-mundi) around that place. Look for the pancha-mundi asanas and perform sadhana. You will be granted with the vision of the reflection of my image, and you will become completely knowledgeable of Lata sadhana."

Following instruction of Taradevi, Karnabharanam began searching place after place for pancha-mundi asanas, and arrived with his wife and daughters at the north-bound Dvaraka River. It was almost evening time. After completion of evening prayer performed separately by husband and wife by the bank of river, they witnessed a super-natural scene. Due to pouring of evening-prayer water on the waves of Dvaraka River, on each part of golden rays of setting Sun they could see the reflection of their desired Ishtadevi Taradevi. They were completely submerged with un-bounded joy.

Thereafter, in accordance with the prescribed rules in Kalabhairava chapter of *Neelatantra* to find out secret pith, Karnabharanam started searching for secret pith or pancha-mundi asanas in nearby places. Then he came to know that there are pancha-mundi asanas around that area. In this place, depression of mind of Karnabharanam was disappeared by the vision of shadow of Ishtadevi, and also thoughts of Lata sadhana arose here. That is why this place is known as Udaypur (place where udaya or arising of thought originated).

Karnabharanam accompanied by his wife prepared to commence Lata sadhana in this place. He was practicing Lata sadhana during twenty-four hours performing eight-fold nyasa (in which one suffuses one's body with seed syllables of deity) and other religious rituals. Along with his wife, every day he was performing japa etc. sitting on asana which can be bounded by same distance on any side as could be measured in five equal steps by a hand. One day, when Karnabharanam was in deep meditation, due to effect of very high level specific yogik practice of pranayama, he was removed from his place of sadhana at Udaypur and was placed about two miles away in the southern direction at the western side of Dvaraka River. At the end of meditation, in Brahma-muhurta (period of forty-eighth minute immediately preceeding sunrise), Karnabharanam called his wife and daughters for daily duties; but, he did not receive any response. He thought he was in his old place at Udaypur. However, he again desperately called his wife and daughters with loud voice;

that voice loaded with high peach was traveling from south to north in the quiet and pleasant nature. Hearing that distress voice, wife of Karnabharanam along with daughters Tara and Hara arrived before him. Earring of Kavindra's wife fell in this place; that is why Ravindra is called Karnabharanam. Thereafter, Karnabharanam and his wife attained siddhi in this place. Name of this place of siddhi is known as Kavichandrapur.

After some time, wife of Karnabharanam died in this Kavichandrapur. Then, her two daughters took up the responsibility of serving and caring of their father and daily worship. Young Tara and Hara had been going to middle of the forest everyday by crossing Dvaraka River from Kavichandrapur. Then, after plucking flowers from the large number of flower-plants near maha-shimul tree on the eastern side. First, they had been offering flowers to Mahadeva Chandrachuhra located at the root of supremely sacred and absolutely white shimul tree. Then, with rest of the flowers they used to return back to their father at Kavichandrapur by crossing the river again.

One day, during their usual duty of offering flowers to Mahadeva Chandrachuhra at the root of the great shimul tree, they noticed a divine shadow of a luminous and meditated sage. Tara and Hara were standing before that radiant shadow of great sage with amazement. Meanwhile, due to the delay of returning with flowers, Karnabharanam from Kavichandrapur was calling Tara and Hara with loud voice. Disturbed by that voice, concentration of the shadow of meditated sage Vashishthadeva was broken. After attainment of siddhi, great sage Vashishthadeva was graciously existed as shadow-god. He noticed that his desired Ishtadevi in the form of two divine women were standing in front of him. By looking at the two divine and glorious Devis as Ishtadevi, joyful tears from the great sage was rolling to completely fill the kamandalu (water-pot used for religious purpose) seated at the yagya-kunda (cavity). Returning back, Tara and Hara narrated that wonderful incident to their father Karnabharanam.

After hearing the reason of delay, Karnabharanam wanted to verify the fact by his own eyes, and along with two daughters went to the root of that maha-shimula tree. He found a big stone (Maha-Shila) engraved with the Lotus Feet print of Mother Tara and also so-called cavity filled with water from kamandalu; but he could not see great sage Vashishthadeva. Looking at the Lotus Feet printed Maha-Shila of Taradevi, Karnabharanam lost consciousness. Then, Tara and Hara made him again conscious using tears from the nearby kunda. Later on, this Vashishtha-kunda has become famous as Jivitakunda. Thereafter, Karnabharanam performed sadhana with great joy along with his daughters at the root of that maha-shimula tree in the front of Lotus Feet printed Maha-Shila, and after attaining siddhi went to eternal world. Tara and Hara, living form of Taradevi, accepted Mahadeva Chandrachuhra located at the root of maha-shimul tree as their husband and absorbed into Him.

Understanding the real meaning of the divine message of Taradevi, it has been proved that secret pith is really this Tarapith. For ages, there have been many pancha-mundi asanas within two miles from Tarapith. In this way, through Karnabharanam and other genuine devotees of Mother, Taradevi spread Her glory and lila. Also, in the same way, this southern great sadhak performing sadhana with whole family and attaining siddhi, left a great example of knowledge, devotion, and work. He was very fortunate to get the opportunity of spreading the glory of Taradevi's endless grace in this world.

1.11 Legend of Attainment of Grace, Serving, and Worshipping by Jaydatta Banik (Merchant)

Sadhana and Siddhi in Tarapith Before Jaydatta Banik

After a long time from the attainment of siddhi by the great sage Vashishthadeva and by the superior sadhak Karnabharanam along with his whole family, Jaydatta Banik (merchant), resident of Ratnagar in district of Birbhum, visited Tarapith and received grace from Brahmamayi Mother Tara. Mainly, in this Kaliyuga, establishment of temple at Tarapith, spreading the glory of Tara, serving and worship of Tara etc. were performed due to grace of Mother Tara by this Jaydatta Banik.

We will now discuss the history of Jaydatta Banik; but before that, we must remember that Jaydatta Banik was not the third siddha sadhak in Mahapith Tarapith after Vashishthadeva and Karnabharanam, because countless sadhakas performed sadhana in Tarapith during the period between attainment of siddhi by Vashishthadeva and Karnabharanam. Also, nobody knows for sure how many sadhakas performed sadhana in Tarapith during the long period between Karnabharanam and Jaydatta. However, a lot of information about this subject could be obtained from the *Gupta Chinachara Tantra* and from the story of that white shalmali tree in the *Shalmali Dahan Tantra*. It is said in the *Shalmali Dahan Tantra*:

> *"Ekadasha sahasranam shalmali sthapatye yada brikshachchhede*
> *Sadhakaendre siddhirudra sahasra shah.*
> *Laksha sadhakam siddhisyam kalau cha madhya bhagatah."*

– "As long as there is this white shimul tree, eleven-

> thousand sadhakas will attain siddhi in this place; and another eleven-thousand sadhakas will attain siddhi even after the destruction (burning) of this shimul tree. Also, in the middle of Kali-Yuga another one-hundred-thousand sadhakas will attain siddhi."

Therefore, it can be observed that when devoted Jaydatta Banik visited Tarapith (probably in thirteenth century), then according to the *Shalmali Dahan Tantra*, quite a few thousand sadhakas might had attained siddhi at the root of great shimul tree. Almost after five-hundred years from the visit of Jaydatta, great Tantrik and incarnation of Shiva Sri Sri Bamakhyapa appeared in Tarapith. In early lila of his grand life he burnt this super-white shimul tree; this is written in the *Shalmali Dahan Tantra* that he would burn this very old shimul tree. Therefore, the shimul tree was burnt after five-hundred years from the visit of Jaydatta in Tarapith. Hence, it is not difficult to imagine from the theory of numbers that there must have been quite a few thousand sadhakas who had attained siddhi before arrival of Jaydatta in Tarapith. Particularly, that great white shimul tree existed before arrival of Vashishthadeva in Satya-Yuga; and it existed also in Kali-Yuga during Jaydatta Banik even after long time from the arrival of Vashishthadeva and Karnabharanam. Therefore, it is not impossible that during this very long period of time at least eight/nine thousand sadhakas out of eleven thousand attained siddhi in Tarapith. The story of the sadhana and siddhi of these countless sadhakas is lost in the midst of very forgetting eternal time (maha-kala). Now, remembering these unknown and forgotten innumerable siddha sadhakas with great respect, history of legendary devotee Jaydatta Banik begins.

Legend of Jaydatta Banik

Once Jaydatta Banik, resident of Ratnagar of Birbhum district, went to a distant land for business by Dvaraka River with a few boats full of trading items. He made huge profit in that trip. Then, accompanied by his son and with lots of wealth he started returning back by river with great pleasure. Suddenly, young son of Jaydatta died due to a minor illness. Jaydatta became extremely grieved; his associates were trying to pacify him in many ways. He told the sad boat-men to return to home as fast as possible; because, the dead body must be shown to the Mother of the son and thereafter this should be immersed in the holy Ganges. He suggested also parching the dead body of his son with clarified butter (ghee) to prevent the decay. Sailing the boats at high speed through out the day, boat-men stopped in the evening at Kavichandrapur by the western side of Dvaraka River. Jaydatta decided to stay here overnight and in the morning he would again start towards his own village Ratnagar. Gradually, night was overcast with darkness; grieved with loss of son, Jaydatta sitting by dead body inside the boat, was gazing at the eastern side of Kavichandrapur with blank look. Sight of a dense and big forest extending by the eastern side of Dvaraka River came to his vision; that place was known as Chandipur.

In the dead of night, endlessly playful (lila-mayi) Taradevi appeared before distressed Jaydatta in the form a teen-aged girl and said,

"Oh merchant! Where-from you have come?
Where is your home?
What merchandise you have brought in the boat?"

Jaydatta was sitting inside the boat; so, he did not respond. Taradevi again asked the same question. Hearing question again and again, Jaydatta became irritated and answered with anger:

"There is useless thing like ashes in the boat."

Listening to this answer, Taradevi laughed and disappeared.

Next day after getting up in the morning, Jaydatta saw that in lieu of costly items there were only useless things like ashes in the boat. By looking at this heart-breaking scene, Jaydatta became terribly distressed like a mad person. He told the boat-men that here he would give up life; he lost his dearest son; lost all wealth; so, what was the use of this life? – With these sayings, he became unconscious.

Boat-men were frightened at the dead-like condition of Jaydatta, and informed people living in the surrounding villages. Villagers came and tried to console the merchant through out the day; but, Jaydatta was lying down with extreme grief. Looking at this condition, boat-men could not start sailing and decided to stay that day in Kavichandrapur ghat (landing-stage by the bank of a river). Gradually, there was commencement of nightfall; villagers returned to their home discussing about the unnatural misfortune of the merchant. In the dead of night, Taradevi again appeared, and started talking to Jaydatta in dream:

"Oh merchant! Where-from you have come?
What wealth you have got in the boat?
Why do you sail the boat?"

Jaydatta Banik answered in the dream:

"I am going to distant land for trading; I have lost my son; wealth has become ashes; why are these happening?"

After hearing this, gracious Taradevi said:

" Oh merchant! Do not feel distressed; in the morning you will get back your wealth in the boat."

Next morning, as said, Jaydatta saw that by the grace of Devi the boat was again full of wealth. He realized that all his sufferings were due to act of some God. Then, he told the boat-men that such troubles came from this Kavichandrapur ghat; so, he instructed them to remove all of his boats from this ghat and to move to opposite direction or to Shimultala ghat in the eastern side of Dvaraka River. Jaydatta thought that after performing daily activities like bath, praying, and lunch in Shimultala ghat, he would start sailing towards home. According to this plan, some boat-men caught some shol fishes (large tubular fish) from the nearby Raghav Vati's lake (Kahrkahria village); and after cutting into pieces took them to wash in the water of Vashishtha-kunda. But surprisingly, sliced pieces were joined together to regain the normal shape of whole fishes, and happily swam into the water. Boat-men went back to Jaydatta and narrated this spectacular event. Jaydatta said that he would believe this event if his dead son could get back to life with the contact of water from Vashishtha-kunda. Then, as soon as ghee soaked dead body of his son was put under water of Vashishtha-kunda, that dead son came out of water reciting "Tara, Tara". Looking at this supernatural scene, Jaydatta and other people shouted with profound joy; keeping the son in his lap there was no limit of happiness for Jaydatta. This Vashishtha-kunda is also known as Jivitakunda as son regained life in this kunda. This Jivitakunda is quoted with great respect in the *Gupta Chinachara Tantra*.

However, listening to Devi's message in dream, regaining wealth from ashes, and getting back life of son; Jaydatta realized that this place must be a holy one. Hearing the name of "Tara, Tara" from the speech of his son, he understood that all these super-natural events were performed by some Devi called Taradevi. This conclusion by Jaydatta was also supported by boat-men and assembled villagers. To receive the vision of Taradevi and to know the nobility of that place, Jaydatta accompanied by a group of followers went to Shimultala; and after cleaning the pathway through the dense forest arrived at the root of the very old white shimul tree; there, he found a stone statue of a Devi, and a very sacred rock (Shila) with engraving of foot prints of Devi; and at a nearby place he discovered the self-born pillar icon of Chandrachuhra Shiva. Jaydatta Banik was a great devotee of Mother and also a spiritual person. He squatted at the root of that great shimul tree for three days with deep sincerity. In response to his great devotion and sincerity Taradevi was very pleased and appeared before Jaydatta within three nights and said, "I am Ugra-Tara, the dweller of this cremation ground. I am known as "Vikatakhya" in the Agama Scripture. I gracefully exist here in the form of stone statue. In the past, sages like Vashishthadeva were granted my vision and boon as a result of their austerities. Now, I am very pleased with your firm devotion, and for the benefit of all creatures and the world I wish to be worshipped in a temple established by you."

Following the instruction of Taradevi, with the help of masons, Jaydatta established a mid-size Taradevi temple behind Jivitakunda; and he made arrangement of daily puja of Taradevi. He appointed also devotee of Mother, Bhairav Paitandi of Mahulla village, as a priest to perform this daily puja.

Jaydatta Banik received vision of Taradevi in the stone statue on the fourteenth day of bright fortnight in the month of Ashvin (September – October); that is why, that lunar day has become the day of greatest festival in Tarapith. After Jaydatta Banik, a Gandhabanik (spice dealer) in the name of Ramapati performed severe austerity at the root of the supremely sacred shimul tree and was gratified by receiving vision and grace of Mother Tara.

1.12 Legend of Establishment of First Temple of Tarama

From time immemorial, for ages, great sages Vashishthadeva, Bhrigu, Durvasa, Parashurama, Dattatreya, etc. and afterwards Karnabharanam with his whole family, and even further down in the time line Jaydatta Banik were gratified with the vision of Mother Tara. There are also many more sadhakas who received grace of Mother Tara during the time period between Vashishthadeva and Karnabharanam, and also in the time elapsed between Karnabharanam and Jaydatta. It is difficult to identify with certainty, who among those countless sadhakas, established the first temple of Mother Tara; but it is almost certain that great brahmins like Vashishthadeva, Bhrigu, Durvasa, Parashurama, Dattatreya, etc could not establish temple of Mother Tara; because, it is kshatriyas or vaishyas and not brahmins who have the natural ability to execute projects like establishment of temple and application of technology. From this point of view, it is not impossible for Jaydatta Banik to establish the temple of Mother Tara. Additionally, from a very old time, hearsay has existed that it is Jaydatta Banik who had established the first temple of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra.

Time period of establishment of temple might be approximately early part of thirteenth century; this hearsay is not only limited to general public, but also has been prevalent among priests of Tara temple from generation to generation. Besides, name of Jaydatta Banik could be also found in Tara worship, poetic story praising Goddess (panchali), and songs etc. of folk literature of

Birbhum. It is observed in later period that activities like establishment of temple (the second and third time) of Mother Tara, daily servicing, puja, etc. were performed by brahmins, kshatriyas, and vaishyas – by people from different casts. It is because of this wish of Mother Tara, in addition to Jaydatta Banik, for ages, there had been - establishment of temple and daily puja by Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury (brahmin), Jagannath Raya, etc. and also arrangement of daily offering of food, worship, and servicing by Rani Bhavani, Raja Ramkrishna, etc.

Thus, it can be noticed that in accordance with the wishes of Taradevi, Taravidya was introduced through great sages Vashishthadeva, Bhrigu, Durvasa, Parashurama, Dattatreya, etc.; and glory of Taradevi was publicized by Jaydatta Banik, Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury, Jagannath Raya, Rani Bhavani, Raja Ramkrishna, etc. It can be also observed that in these introduction and publicity, so-called Chinachara of Tara-puja has the dominant role; besides, there is always virachara as integral part of Tara worship.

Tara puja and Her lila have been illuminated with Chinachara by the combined sadhana and service of brahmins, kshatriyas, and vaishyas; high and low castes have been mingled into one by the light of Chinachara.

Thus, Jaydatta will be remembered for ever in the history of introduction of lila of Mother Tara of Tarapith; in the context of establishment of first temple of Mother Tara, Jaydatta Banik is ever-stamped as Her first graced devotee and follower. Universal Mother Tara had introduced Her glory and graciousness in the world through this devoted merchant.

Thus, as establisher of first temple of Mother Tara, devotee and follower Jaydatta Banik has become an ideal example of someone witnessing super-natural lila and unbounded grace of Mother Tara.

End of Part 1 of Mahapith Tarapith.

MAHAPITH TARAPITH

PART 2

MIDDLE AGES, EARLY PERIOD

2.1 Natural Beauty of Tarapith in Middle Ages

In one word, natural beauty of Tarapith in middle ages was splendid. Although, glamour of that hermitage of old age and so-called city-based splendour of pre-middle ages were lost; even then, natural beauty of Tarapith in middle ages was full of another type of fearful show. Endless blue sky was extending over unbounded upper hemisphere; vast majestic cremation ground (maha-shmashana) was in the lower; that terrible maha-shmashana was covered with dense green; supremely sacred Dvaraka River was flowing by the side like efflux of time reminding the untold and countless history of many ages. In the midst of that vast and dense maha-shmashana, temple of Mother Tara was gracefully present. In a far away land, scattered small villages and corpse-fields could be seen like sweet dream due to pleasant touch of green; sometimes, flight of white geese floated in the blue sky at the illusive beckoning with hand by green. Frequently, in the quiet mid-day disinterested sounds of ravens could be heard in the deep silence of maha-shmashana.

Nature was talkative here; sky, air, river, cremation ground – everything was reverberating in Tarapith; all was voluble in the midst of silent atmosphere. In the middle of this grand resounding nature men had become speechless. It is the nature who spoke, men only listened; even in the day time, voice of men could be barely heard. Vast maha-shmashana was bright and shining in solitude and reverberation around Tarapith.

This maha-shmashana was extending from Udaypur in north to Kahrkahria in south, and Tarapur in the east to Kundala village in the west. All around, a reserved and grave silence existed. This seclusion was so deep that it could not be disturbed by men; rather whoever came in touch with this grand silence, he became speechless within. Gradually submerged into own soul, he could hear a grave and sweet AUM sound – for ages, which has been always reverberating in the atmosphere of Tarapith.

In the night time, maha-shmashana would be horrible; this lively maha-shmashana was infected with corpses, foxes, dogs, and snakes; this majestic maha-shmashana extending about ten miles was covered under deep darkness. A terrible scene was created in the night with the fighting over disintegrated corpses by foxes and dogs, free movement of countless and very poisonous snakes, sigh of innumerable unsatisfied and bodiless souls; sad and crying sound of young vultures, etc. Even in this horrible atmosphere, there would be fearless Tara sadhakas who would be performing sadhana at the root of the great white shimul tree with profound austerity to receive grace of Universal Mother Tara.

The temple of Mother Tara was in the eastern part of the maha-shmashana. On the eastern side of the temple there were small huts made of clays for the priests of daily worshipping of Mother Tara. Jiivitakunda was in front of the Tara temple. In the north-east there was a temple of eternal Chandrachuhra. In such a pleasant, quiet, and solitary atmosphere the natural beauty of Tarapith in middle ages was ever lively and joyful.

2.2 History of Second Time Establishment of Tara Temple

A long period was passed away after first time establishment of Mother Tara's temple and associated temple of Chandrachuhra Shiva; and making arrangement of daily servicing and puja by Jaydatta Banik. During this long period, lot of devotees living near Tarapith and also devotees from distant places made temporary arrangement of servicing Mother Tara with a view to fulfill their objectives. Exact number and detailed description of these devotees are submerged in the abyss of oblivion.

When the temples of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva became worn-out and ruined by the cruel grip of eternal time, Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury of Ehrol village in Birbhum established second time temples of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva. At that time priest of Tara temple was Gangaram Thakur who was thirteenth descendant of Bhairav Thakur who was selected by Jaydatta Banik as first priest of Tara temple.

Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury was extremely bountiful; this brahmin of rishi Kashyap lineage was famous as "Raja" because of his vast wealth and great nobleness. He was one of the principal employees or "pattanidar" of Raja Udaynarayan of Rajsahi district of north Bengal. Tarapur or Tarapith was included in his areas of responsibility. He not only established temples of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva, but also arranged to excavate a big pond in the name of "Tara sagar". Besides, there is hearsay that in Kuleshvar village he established temples of Sri Sri Kaleshnatha Shiva and Mother Tara, and also executed excavation of a large pond in the name of "Dheka Ram Sagar".

Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury had a house in Tarapith or Chandipur. In addition to establishment of temple, he arranged daily servicing and puja of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra from the income of Chandipur and Bhamra estates. Also, he donated lands in abundance to priests (pandas) for servicing deity. We will discuss this in great detail in next section.

2.3 History of Servicing Tarama in Chronological Order of Devotees

The long history of servicing Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra in Tarapith is described as below:

1. Jaydatta Banik

He was the first devotee who by spending lot of money established first time temples of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva and arranged daily servicing and puja. Besides, he appointed Bhairav Paitandi as first priest of Tara temple, and made him and his descendants responsible for servicing and puja forever. We have already discussed in detail about Jaydatta Banik in earlier section.

2. Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury

During the period between Jaydatta and Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury, quite a few devotees made temporary arrangement of servicing Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva; but detail description of them could not be found out.

Temples of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva established by Jaydatta became very worn-out. At this time, after about three-hundred and fifty years from the establishment of temples by Jaydatta, approximately in the Bengali calendar year 1150 (1743 AD), devotee of Brahman and great bountiful Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury of Ehrol village in Birbhum established new temples of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva. Also, he made special arrangement of daily servicing and puja of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva.

During the period of Raja Ramjivan, Birbhum district was part of the properties of Raja Udaynarayan of Rajsahi. Raja Ramjivan was the chief employee of Udaynarayan. Therefore, Tarapur or Chandipur was under care of Raja Ramjivan. He made arrangement for daily servicing and puja of Mother Tara from the income of Chandipur estate and also from the earnings of another devottara (property endowed for defraying the cost of worshipping a deity) estate Bhamra village in Phatesing area. Also, he made arrangement of servicing for the pious and ascetic men, and for guests. He donated lands to pandas for daily servicing of Mother Tara; by generations, pandas have been enjoying those lands; even today, Ashutosh Panda etc. possess those lands donated by Raja Ramjivan on account of priesthood for the temple. It is Raja Ramjivan who introduced for the first time offering of khichuri (food prepared by boiling together rice and pea) and payes (rice-pudding).

Ramjivan Chowdhury allotted five and one-quarter Anas (Ana is obsolete monetary unit – one-sixteenth of Indian Rupee) for daily servicing of Mother Tara. During his time, this amount of money was not negligible; rather, it was quite sufficient; because, one could purchase eight mans (man is obsolete measure of weight – one man is about 82 Lbs.) rice with one Indian Rupee at that time. Navav (ruler) Alivardi Khan was navav of Bengal in that period; people were more or less living happily; cost of rice was only two anas per man; so, one could receive over two and half mans rice with five and one-quarter Anas. Thus, with offering of two and half mans rice, Ramjivan Chowdhury could nicely perform daily serving of Mother Tara; and this prasad (food-offering) would have been distributed daily among pandas, pious and ascetic men, and also devoted family men visiting Tarapith as guests.

In this way, for quite some time there was peace and happiness. Suddenly, a disaster stroke; Pathan (people from north-west part of Pakistan) Alilaki Khan, ruler of Rajnagar near Birbhum, captured by force this Chandipur (Tarapur or Tarapith) of Ramjivan, and drove away Ramjivan Chowdhury from Chandipur.

There is a legend about this expulsion of Ramjivan Chowdhury:

During the period of Ramjivan Chowdhury, navav Alivardi Khan was the ruler of Bengal. Without the permission of navav, Ramjivan Chowdhury spent one laksha (100,000) Rupees on account of establishment of temples of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva, "Tara-Sagar" dighi (large pond) etc. He was brought to Murshidavad (capital of Bengal) as a captive for trial. Ramjivan Chowdhury spoke the truth; he argued that as preservation of the site of archaeological importance, he established a new temple in the south of worn-out old Tara temple constructed by Jaydatta Banik. Navav Alivardi Khan sent some employees to Tarapith to verify the statement of Ramjivan Chowdhury (this was approximately happened in the year 1745 AD or 1152 per Bengali calendar year). After returning from Tarapith, employees told Alivardi Khan that Ramjivan Chowdhury did speak the truth. As a result of his truthfulness, navav Alivardi Khan was very pleased, and he released Ramjivan Chowdhury and also exempted him from returning due revenue of one laksha Rupees.

However, Pathan ruler Alilaki Khan took possession of Chandipur estate and expelled Ramjivan Chowdhury from Chandipur or Tarapith. At that time, fate of the ruler of Rajsahi Udaynarayan was also not favorable; due to several reasons, he could not act against the injustice committed by Alilaki Khan. Consequently, Chandipur or Tarapith was added into the territory of Alilaki Khan. In that difficult time, aforesaid servicing and puja was almost about to be discontinued. Somehow, with whatever income was available from the devottara estate of Bhamra village, pandas managed to provide servicing and puja of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva.

This Chandipur estate was part of the territories of Alilaki Khan for a long period of thirty years. Thereafter, great sadhak and ruler Raja Ramkrishna rescued this estate from the grip of Alilaki Khan; this legend will be discussed later in great detail.

Descendants of Raja Ramjivan are famous as "Varuyye" (Banerjee in English) of Ehrol village. As a mark of respect for the glorious services of Raja Ramjivan; during puja of Mother Tara on the fourteenth day of white fortnight in the month of Ashvin (September – October); first puja from Ehrol is offered to Mother Tara; and only afterwards, puja from other rulers and jamidars (land-owners) are offered; this long-standing tradition is continuing even today.

3. Rani Jayavati

After Ramjivan Chowdhury, Rani Jayavati of Murshidavad took the responsibility of servicing and puja of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra. Rani Jayavati prayed to Mother Tara for a child, and consequently she bore a daughter and gave her the name of Raj-Rajeshvari. When this daughter became adult, she was married to Suryamani Chowdhury, jamidar of Kandi Vagdanga of Murshidavad district; Suryamani was a Brahmin from Vundelkhanda.

4. Suryamani Chowdhury

Due to connection with Mother-in-law Jayavati, Suryamani Chowdhury accepted the responsibility of servicing Mother Tara. In addition to making arrangement for daily servicing of Mother Tara, he donated lands to pandas and provided devottara lands for servicing Mother Tara. Afterwards, his descendants i.e. land-lords of Vagdanga maintained this tradition for a very long time. On fourteenth day of white fortnight in the month of Ashvin (September – October), after puja from "Varuyye" of Ehrol village, puja from this Vagdanga village is offered to Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva.

5. Kali Raya

At this time, successor of Vir Raja of Birbhum was suddenly killed by his own Pathan employee, and Muslims captured the throne. Tarapith was under Kali Raya at this time, and he made special provision of servicing Mother Tara; but unfortunately, Muslim rulers defeated Kali Raya and captured Tarapith. During this distressed time, pandas maintained servicing Mother Tara with only payes; that "payes anna" (sweet- pudding with rice) item has been maintained even today as essential for daily servicing of Mother Tara.

6. Landlord of Sa-pur

Thereafter, jamidar (landlord) of Sa-pur made arrangement of servicing Mother Tara with the permission of Muslim rulers.

7. Maharaja of Dinajpur

Maharaja of Dinajpura also arranged servicing and puja of Tarama. Besides, he donated lands in Tarapur village as a service fee to the musicians of that band which has been playing for a long time everyday in the morning and evening in Tara temple; from generation to generation, these musicians have been enjoying those lands.

8. Raja Udmanta Singh

Raja Udmanta Singh, land-owner of Nashipur under Murshidavad made arrangement of daily servicing and puja of Universal Mother Tara. He executed also production of Mother Tara's silver mask and silver string of severed human heads.

9. Malliks of Jomakandir

Mallik's of Jomakandir also arranged servicing of goddess of Tarapith, Mother Tara. In many ways, they made monetary help for daily servicing.

Earlier we have discussed about devottara estate of Bhamra village belonged to Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury of Erhol. Generation-wise pandas were performing service to Mother Tara using tax-free income of that estate. Later on, British Government levied a tax on that income applying a law of collecting tax on land over certain limit. As a result of this tax levy and default of tax payment owing to many joint-owners, this Bhamra village was auctioned in the year 1783 AD. This had again created a temporary setback regarding servicing of Mother Tara. However, due to devottara lands donated by the aforesaid land-owners, jamidars, and kings, this temporary problem could be solved. Thus, pandas across generations have been enjoying those devottara lands and have been servicing Mother Tara.

10. Rani Bhavani and Raja Ramkrishna

After Mallik's of Jomakandir, owner of half of Bengal and ever memorable Rani Bhavani took care of servicing Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva. Raja Ramkrishna, great sadhak and super bountiful, adopted son and heir of Rani Bhavani, was the main supporter to this great and sacred effort of Rani Bhavani.

Approximately in the year 1776 AD, at the age of 37 years, Raja Ramkrishna arrived at Tarapith from Bonahat village in Birbhum which was under jurisdiction of Natore, to pay homage to Universal Mother Tara. After paying homage to Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva, he engaged in sadhana of Mother Tara in this most favourable to Tantrik religious practice place Mahapith Tarapith. At this time, he was initiated in Kaula-Rites by Anandanath, the chief Kaula (practitioner of left-handed Tantrik path) of Tarapith. Sadhana and siddhi of Raja Ramkrishna will be discussed in detail in later section.

Great devotee of Mother, raja (king) and saint-like at the same time, Ramkrishna visited Tarapith many times during the period from 1776 AD to 1784 AD. During these visits, his noble heart was moved with grief by witnessing the disastrous condition of servicing and puja of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva. He noticed absence of any provision of serving pious, ascetic, and guest people. He heard the cause of distress condition directly from the pandas and immediately took action to restore provision of daily offering of rice-meal to Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva, and treating pious, ascetic, and guest persons with the rice-meal prasad (offered food to God becomes prasad after puja).

Raja Ramkrishna took initiative to recover Tarapith or Chandipur as at that time it was under Pathan king Alilaki Khan. He realized that if he could include Tarapith into his territory, then all these problems related to daily servicing and puja could be resolved. Accordingly, wise Raja Ramkrishna purchased a unit of Alilaki Khan from a person named Kashinath Hora. He offered also Mahula unit (Bonahat unit according to different view) under jurisdiction of Natore to Alilaki Khan, and as an exchange recovered Chandipur unit from him. By including Chandipur unit into his territory and donating this as devottara property, Raja Ramkrishna made very good arrangement of servicing and puja of Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva and other recipients of service.

There is hearsay in this respect: Respected Brahmin Ramakanai Raya of Kharuna village was among one of his distinguished people. He was the administrator (nayev) of the property of Alilaki Khan. According to wish of Raja Ramkrishna, he contributed a great deal of effort in rescuing Chandipur unit as an exchange. As a reward for this outstanding effort, Raja Ramkrishna quite happily donated some land and pond in Kharuna village to Ramakanai Raya.

Similar to the above incident, many stories about the generosity of Raja Ramkrishna are well known. He made huge donation to Hindu, Muslim, pious, ascetic – all, irrespective of race and religion. Legend of his charity was spread throughout India. As a mark of respect for his outstanding donation, Muslim king of India at that time decorated him with the title – "Maharajdhiraj Prithvipati Bahadur" (Great and honorable king of the world). Raja Ramkrishna was not just a charitable king, he was at the same time great sadhak of Mother Tara, poet, musician, song-writer, composer, and siddha yogi. In that time, revenue of Chandipur unit was 2,000 Indian Rupees per year. Raja Ramkrishna donated this income of 2,000 Indian Rupees per year as devottara for servicing Mother Tara. Besides Chandipur, he had also made arrangement of more income for servicing Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva. At that time, ten ser (a measure of weight; one ser is equal to 1/40 man or about 2 Pounds) un-boiled (atap) rice was offered daily to Mother Tara and Chandrachuhra Shiva. Also, he repaired the Tara temple established by Raja Ramjivan.

In connection with the great service of Raja Ramkrishna, a very aged sadhu of Tarapith said that when Raja Ramkrishna was busy with Chandipur for establishment of proper servicing, he left his mortal body reaching at a very high level of sadhana. After his death, his mother Rani Bhavani accepted the responsibility of servicing and puja of Mother Tara. She also donated many lands around Chandipur and nearby places as devottara properties to Brahmins; generation-wise, they have been enjoying these lands. From that old time to present, more than a long period of 200 years, service of Rani Bhavani of Natore and Raja Ramkrishna has been continuing from generation to generation.

11. Maharaja Anandanath Raya

After death of the great devotee Raja Ramkrishna, servicing of Mother Tara was nicely continuing for a long time with the help from Natore; but again problem occurred for the servicing of Mother Tara. Due to confiscation of tax-free properties by British Government, servicing of Mother Tara was almost about to be discontinued. At that time in the year 1841 AD, Maharaja of Natore, Anandanath Raya, recovered Chandipur unit from Government and reintroduced offering of rice-meal and performing puja as before.

12. Yogendranath Raya

Following the tradition of Anandanath Raya, great devotee Maharaja Yogendranath Raya provided servicing of Mother Tara. He received special grace from Parama-Purusha Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Often, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa used to praise his service. He was child-less, and by the grace of Bamdev, he was blessed with a son.

13. Virendranath Raya

Following the foot-steps of the former rulers of Natore, he continued to provide servicing of Tara; he managed servicing of Mother Tara in accordance with the same style as was introduced by Anandanath Raya and Yogendranath Raya.

In this respect, it is mentionable that Raja Ramkrishna had two sons; after death of Raja Ramkrishna, his eldest son or senior side received devottara property to provide service to Vaishnavas; and youngest son or junior side was granted with the devottara property to take care of Shaktas. From that time, ruling dynasty of Natore has been servicing both Vaishnavas and Shaktas in these two forms. Naturally, junior side of Natore has been servicing Mother Tara for the last centuries.

Maharaja Virendranath Raya, as owner of younger side of Natore, is quite famous as distinguished devotee and server of Mother Tara. In the early part of twentieth century (1901 AD – 1911 AD), he was also fortunate enough to unexpectedly receive grace in supernatural fashion from Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Maha-Tantrik Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was very satisfied throughout his life for the service of Natore, and this extraordinary service of Natore dynasty was always highly praised by him.

After death of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, between 1319 – 1325 in Bengali calendar years, old food-preparing hall and broken-down walls were demolished; and new food-preparing and dinning halls, and walls of Tara temple were constructed. Besides, places adjacent to the temple were also repaired by younger side of Natore. From the time after death of Maharaja Virendranath Raya to even today, younger side of Natore has been trying their best to provide service to Mother Tara. Due to division of country (India was divided in the year 1947 AD) and abolition of jamidari rule (right to receive tax from the use of land by the subjects), like many other kings and jamidars, Natore dynasty also suffered big loss. Although their worldly wealth has been reduced, the grand tradition of great servicing of Mother Tara created by them for centuries will remain imperishable, and immortal forever as a symbol of eternal and supremely sacred service. Natore has become inseparable forever from Mahapith Tarapith which is the living symbol of daily lila of Universal Mother Tara.

2.4 Description of Puja of Shilamayi Tarama

Supremely sacred stone representing Brahman (Brahma-Shila) gracefully exist in the temple of Mother Tara. Daily puja and servicing are offered to this specific Brahma-Shila which is actually pupil of the upper eye of Satidevi. In Satya-Yuga, pupil of the top eye of Satidevi was severed by discus of Vishnu and was deposited at the foot of the super-white shimul tree in Tarapith. As soon as divine wisdom-eye (top eye) of Satidevi touched the ground, it was converted into a big stone. It is said in the *Gupta-Chinachara-Tantra*:

> "*Urddhanetra patenaiva ugra tara shilamayi;*
> *Lakshatraya prajaptena punaragamanam nahi.*"
>
> – "Ugra-Tara resides here as Shilamayi (in the form of stone). Sadhak will attain mukti (no more birth in this deathly world) by 300,000 Japas to this Brahma-Shila."

Great rishi Vashishthadeva came to Tarapith to perform sadhana according to Chinachara. During sadhana he viewed the Shilamayi form of pupil of the top eye of Satidevi at the foot of the great super-white shimul tree; and at the completion of sadhana in this Brahma-Shila, he became siddha by witnessing the divine form of Ugra-Tara. Afterwards, many other sadhakas like Ravindra Karnabharanam, Jaydatta Banik, etc. were also graced with the audience of Mother Tara at this Brahma-Shila. Tarapith is called "jnana-pith", because pupil of the wisdom-eye of Satidevi fell at the Brahma-Shila of Tarapith; this Tarapith is well known as "jnana-kshetra" or "mukti-kshetra". By performing sadhana in this sacred place, all ignorance and illusion could be dispelled, and all suffering from three kinds of afflictions would be also removed forever. Thus, this Brahma-Shila is living image of Mother Tara. Taradevi is graciously resides here as Shilamayi Tara. According to the *Gupta*

Chinachara Kramah Tantra, "....*shilamayeti taddevi nivasan shalmali mule*."- "Bhagavati Taradevi resides as Shila-mayi at the foot of the great super-white shimul tree."

Great sage Vashishthadeva performed sadhana of Ugra-Tara at this stone, and by the grace of Shilamayi he became siddha. Because of this reason, this super-sacred Brahma-Shila is described in the *Tara Rahasyam* – " *Vashishtharadhita tara yatra tara shila-mayi*."- "The place where Vashishthadeva worshipped Tara, that is the place of Shilamayi Tara."

In subsequent years, many sadhakas like Ravindra Karnabharanam etc. received audience of Ugra-Tara at this Brahma-Shila. Jaydatta Banik, after receiving audience and grace, under direction of Mother Tara, established a temple at this Brahma-Shila near super-white shimul tree in the majestic cremation ground. Also, he arranged daily worship of Ugra-Tara or Bhagavati Chandi.

A few centuries later, Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury established Tara temple for the second time at this Brahma-Shila and organized proper service and worship of Mother Tara. There is hearsay that Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury realized the problems associated with the daily service and worship of Mother Tara and sufferings of devotees in daily traveling during day and night to the old temple established by Jaydatta Banik in the middle of majestic cremation ground. Therefore, he ignored the unsuitable location of first temple, and built the second Tara temple at the higher level in the south of Jivitakunda around human settlement. He brought the Shilamayi Ugra-Tara from majestic cremation ground, installed Her in this new temple, and arranged daily service and worship.

From that time onwards, for the last 275 years, tradition of daily service and worship is being performed at Brahma-Shilamayi

Mother Tara. This Brahma-Shila is situated on a platform in the innermost part of the main temple. A magnificent throne made of touchstone is installed on this platform. On this throne, Universal Mother Tara is gracefully present in the form of Shilamayi or Brahma-Shila. There is a figure inscribed on this Brahma-Shila, which is symbol of divine body part of Bhagavati Sati. A suckling woman is in lying position, and there is a child on Her breast in a spell of sucking mood. This image reminds us the days of ocean-churning when poison-remover Mother Tara saved severely oppressed with poison Shiva by affectionately suckling Him with Mother's milk. This figure reminds also another story - origin of the customary worship of Kshetrapala which is celebrated everyday as part of daily worship of Mother Tara. There also, Mother Tara affectionately suckles Shiva.

Everyday from Brahma-muhurta (48 minutes preceding sunrise) to ten p.m. daily worship and service have been performed at this Brahma-Shila. The pre-assigned panda (priest) who is responsible to perform puja on a specific day, rouses Universal Mother Tara at Brahma-muhurta and cleans the garbhavas (inner most part of the temple). Then panda performs the following activities in sequence in the morning:

- Massages the body of Mother Tara with scented oil and then bathes by pouring water from many vases.
- Clothes the Shilamayi Mother with new dress and decorates with many ornaments.
- Beautifies Mother with silver mask, silver string of several human heads (munda-mala), silver crown, and garland of java (red species of the Chinarose) and lotus flowers.
- Greets deity by waving lamp, Incense, etc. (arati), offers food made of sweets and water
- Gives Mother a rest.

During mid-day, panda offers food made of fish, vegetables, pickle, sweet, etc. to Mother. Then again, Mother is given a rest. This time, temple is kept closed for the public.

In evening, arati is performed. After puja, evening-food offering (shitali) is made. In night, idol of Mother is placed on Her own bed for sleep, and panda fans Her with hand-made fan made of hair of a yak's tail (chamar). Then panda removes all silver mask, crown, munda-mala, ornaments, etc. from the idol and after closing the temple takes these invaluable divine items to his home under his personal care. Next day, he brings these items back to the temple at Brahma-muhurta and hands over to the responsible panda of that day.

Meat-offering is also made to Mother Tara, particularly in special days like Ashtami (eighth day of either fortnight), Amavasya (fourteenth day of dark fortnight), full Moon, and Sankranti (last day of the Bengali month). Male goats are sacrificed in Ashtami and Chaturdashi (fourteenth day of lunar fortnight). Sacrifice of goats are also performed on Saturdays, Tuesdays, and Amavasyas by the devotees on account of manat (promise to offer sacrifice on fulfillment of a prayer).

Most important puja of Mother Tara at Tarapith is performed on the Kojagari Chaturdashi (day of full Moon in Ashvin – Kartik Bengali calendar month or September – November in autumn). This is celebrated with great pomp and splendour. Grand fair continues for seven days. For ages, this puja on the Kojagari Chaturdashi is famous because great sage Vashishthadeva got the audience of Mother Tara in this auspicious day. Also, Jaydatta Banik established temple of Mother Tara in this lunar day. Throughout the day and night puja is performed in this day. In this great sacred lunar day of bright fortnight, only once in a year, idol of Mother Tara is brought from the main temple to resting place in the western side of the temple. Special puja, food-offerings, and many sacrifice of goats are performed. After evening arati, Mother is brought back to the main temple with a great procession and She gets bathe and special puja, and goat sacrifice are performed. In the night, special offering is made to Mother. On this occasion, great gathering of sadhus (pious) and devotees from Birbhum, Bengal, and other places of India takes place. The grand fair which is celebrated on this day is famous as "Fair of Chaturdashi".

In addition to puja of Mother Tara, some other festivals like Ratha-Yatra (Lord Jagannatha rides on a chariot), Janmastami (birth day of Lord Krishna), Shiva–Chaturdashi), Dole-Yatra (feast of Krishna's swing), Amvaruni, etc. are also celebrated in Tarapith.

Shila-Murti (stony idol) of Mother Tara is placed facing north. Shiva resides in Kailas mountain, which is situated north of India. Thus, Mother Tara is facing towards Her husband Shiva in north.

There is another explanation of this north facing position of Tara. Mother Tara is obstructing door of Lord Yama (god of death) in the south direction. If you pray to Mother Tara with utmost devotion and sincerity, you will avoid the journey to the door of death. Thus, devotees perform puja of Shilamayi form of Mother Tara or Brahma-Shila by sitting in a position facing south direction.

2.5 Serving and Puja of Chandrachuhra Shiva

Can Dabukeshvara Shiva be the Bhairava of Tarama of Tarapith?

Eternal Chandrachuhra Shiva is the lively Bhairava of universal Mother Tarama. He gracefully exists as beginning-less pillar image (Anadilinga) of Shiva. According to some views, Dabukeshvara Shiva is the Bhairava of Tarama. Again, in another view, Anadilinga Bakranatha of Bakreshvar is the real Bhairava of Tarama.

It can be noticed in all Shakti pithas of India that Shiva always exists as Bhairava along with Shakti in all sacred places wherever any one of the 108 pieces of the divine body of Satidevi fell after disintegrated by discus of Vishnu in the Satya yuga. A few examples are: Anadilinga Nakuleshvara Shiva in Kalighat, Siddheshvara Shiva in Prabhas, Bhairavaeshvara Shiva in Tristrotaya, Bakranatha Shiva in Bakreshvar. Therefore, the Bhairava of Tarama of Tarapith can not reside in Dabuk which is situated far from Tarapith. Bhairava must exist at Shakti pith along with Shakti.

Dabukeshvara Shiva is only recently discovered in the nineteenth century by Kailaspati of Dabuk. However, Tarapith has been recognized as Shaktipith since Satya yuga. This has been the living centre of Shaktipith for ages in the tradition of great sadhakas – from Vashishtha to Sri Sri Bamakhyapa to uncountable sadhakas. Thus from Satya yuga to Kali yuga, during this vast period of time, the Bhairava of this Shakti pith i.e. Tarapith can not be left undiscovered, because from time immemorial, in all Shakti pithas in India, Bhairava Shiva has been always worshipped along with worshipping of Shakti. Concurrent with the discovery of Shakti pith, Bhairava Shiva also was always discovered. Therefore, in all ages in all Shakti pithas Shiva and Shakti have been always worshipped as an inseparable pair. There is puja of Tarama but Her Bhairava is undiscovered for ages and resides in different place – this situation of puja of Shakti without puja of Shiva is unimaginable. This has never happened and never will be happened in any Shakti pith. Therefore, under no circumstances Dabukeshvara Shiva can be the Bhairava of Tarama.

Bakreshvar is included in Shakti pithas; mid-eyebrow of Satidevi fell in this place. Shakti is gracefully resides here in the form of Buffalo-demon killer (Mahisha-Mardini) Durga. Her Bhairava is Bakranatha Shiva. Therefore, there is no reason for Bakranatha Shiva to be the Bhairava of Tarama. He is the Bhairava of Mahisha-Mardini Durga.

Chandrachuhra Shiva

Bhairava of universal Mother Tarama is the God of all Gods Mahadeva Chandrachuhra Shiva. From the age of Satya yuga, along with puja of Tarama, He is being worshipped in Tarapith as Her Bhairava. For ages, along with Tarama He has been granting grace to all Tara sadhakas; He and Tarama are not different. From Vashishthadeva to Sri Sri Bamakhyapa and afterwards India famous great sadhakas and sadhikas like Pitaji Bholanath (Swami Tibbatananda), Sri Sri Anandamayima etc. were blessed with His care, grace, and vision.

After Vashishthadeva, Karnabharanam and his two daughters Tara and Hara, who were born out of Gods, used to perform daily puja of Chandrachuhra Shiva. Subsequently, Devi Tara and Hara accepted Chandrachuhra Shiva as their husband and were absorbed into Him.

In Kali yuga, Jaydatta Banik constructed temple of Chandrachuhra Shiva along with the temple of Tarama. Also, he made arrangement of daily serving and puja of Chandrachuhra Shiva. In later period, Raja Ramjivan Chowdhury constructed temple of Chandrachuhra Shiva for the second time along with the temple of Tarama, and arranged daily serving and puja of Chandrachuhra Shiva. Thereafter, in course of time, Rani Jayavati, Suryamani Chowdhury, Kaliraya, Landlord of Sapura, Maharaja of Dinajpur, Raja Udmanta Singh, Rani Bhavani and Raja Ramkrishna, Anandanath Raya, Virendranath Raya etc. made provision for daily serving and puja of both Tarama and Chandrachuhra Shiva. In addition, many of the aforesaid great devotees repaired temple of Chandrachuhra Shiva more than once. There are lots of stories of unusual activities performed by Bhairava of Tarama, God of all Gods, Mahadeva Chandrachuhra Shiva.

2.6 Beneficiary Pandas of Tarama

Residential quarters of beneficiary pandas or the descendants of the first priest Bhairav Thakur are situated in the east and south-east sides of Tara temple. All living quarters are made of clay with hay covered roofs. There are about thirty – forty families of pandas. They perform all the serving duties for Tarama like giving bath, dressing etc. Puja and food offerings are arranged through persons employed by younger side of Natore's dynasty.

Pandas by turns perform daily serving of Tarama. Yajmans (on whose behalf a priest worships) and pilgrims are part of their supporters for maintenance. Pandas are mainly dependants on agriculture. Generation-wise, as beneficiaries, they have been enjoying properties donated for the purpose of serving Tarama. Pandas take great care of the pilgrims. They are quite satisfied with moderate living. In this respect they can be compared with pandas of Kamakhya who are also satisfied with moderate living and not greedy. New pilgrims become yajmans of the paladar (who is assigned by turns to be panda of that day). However, old pilgrims and their relatives will be yajmans of the panda of old pilgrims – not of the paladar.

Assigned paladar of the selected day serves Mother Tara throughout that day and night. He opens the door of Tara temple at 4 o'clock in the morning, gives bath to Mother, clothes Her with dress, and performs arati and other activities. Afterwards, he arranges servicing and food offerings. At this time, many pilgrims watch the stone-image of Tarama. It is permitted to watch this stone-image only in two events – during bath time of Mother Tara before five o'clock in the morning, and after evening arati during removal of formal dress of the day. In any other time, watching of stone-image must not be allowed as this will violate the strict doctrine of religious directives.

The paladar of the day gets the key of the Mother's temple. In the assigned day, paladar opens the temple door in the morning, cleans the rooms, plucks flowers for puja, massages the stone-image of Tarama with scented oil, clothes the image with new dress, decorates with many ornaments, performs puja and offers food. Silver masks, munda-mala, ornaments, etc. are kept under care of the paladar. If these very valuable items are lost, paladar will be held responsible. Everyday after four dandas (1 danda = 24 minutes) from the end of evening arati and food-offering, prayer is made to Mother for taking sleep on the prepared bed. Opening of the temple is forbidden after Mother goes on sleep.

Panda is just a title of beneficiaries of Tara temple. Panda is similar to Guru, but only for the time of pilgrimage. Their personal surname is Chattopadhyaya, Raya, Bhattacharya, etc. but, generation-wise, "panda" is normally used as their title.

In the case of necessity, paladan (exchange of right of paladar) is allowed. In addition to pandas, there are many manual laborer-class people like – potters, blacksmiths, barbers, sweepers etc. Besides, there are ferry-men to ferry across the Dvaraka River. These ferrymen perform also the activities related to the cremation ground.

2.7 Supremely Sacred Jivitakunda

Jivitakunda is situated in the north or in front of north-facing temple of Tarama. Old name of Jivitakunda is Vashishthakunda or Sudhahrad. When Vashishthadeva saw Tara and Hara (two divine daughters of Karnabharanam), joyful tears from the eyes of the great sage created this kunda (pond); that is why, this was called Vashishthakunda. In the later period, when Karnabharanam became unconscious after viewing Padpadma-Shila (big stone engraved with lotus feet of Mother), Tara and Hara brought his consciousness using holy water from this Vashishthakunda. This kunda was known also as Sudhahrad, because its water is sacred like sudha (nectar).

In subsequent period, sliced pieces of shol fishes belong to boat-men of Jaydatta merchant were joined together in the water of this kunda; also, dead son of Jaydatta regained life with the help of sacred water of this kunda; that is why, it is now known as Jivitakunda.

Water of Jivitakunda is very sacred. It is this holy water which is being used in all ages for daily food offering and puja of Tarama. Innumerable siddha sadhakas, pious people, family men and ascetic, persons take bath in the holy kunda. This supremely sacred Jivitakunda is quoted in the *Gupta Chinachara Tantra*:

> *"Purva-bhagasthita kundashnaiva sudhahradam;*
> *Mritam samjayate pranam purna vatsa sunishchitam."*
>
> –"Sudhahrad is situated in the eastern side of the cremation ground. It is certain that ladies who gave birth to still-born babies will get long life and healthy offspring by taking bath in this water."

This Jivitakunda was cleansed for several times. There is another kunda inside of this Jivitakunda; water of that kunda can not be estimated. In the year 1818 AD, Jagannath Raya in the cleansing process expanded area of Jivitakunda. Three ghatas (landing-stages) were established in east, west and south directions. Flower-beds were arranged on both sides of the western ghat. Main north-south bound rural road of Tarapith is in western side of Jivitakunda. Great cremation ground is in western side of this main rural road. In later period or in modern times Jivitakunda was again cleansed for three more times.

Religious people should visit Tarama and Chandrachuhra Shiva after taking bath in this sacred Jivitakunda. Particularly, during festive occasions, Jivitakunda is crowded with sadhus, ascetics and religious family men.

In addition to outer appearance, there is also an inner meaning of Jivitakunda. Sadhak after renouncing limited character of embodied soul gains his true form and becomes immortal through self-realization; from the hrid-kunda (bottom of his heart) he arises as eternal. Thus, it is said about the true nature of Jivitakunda:

> *"Refasta kunkumabhas kunda madhye vyavasthita;*
> *Makarashcha vindurupou mahayanou sthitapriye."*
> – [*Tantrasar*]
>
> – " Blood-red self-born Shiva resides in the navel. The cavity in the head of linga (pillar-image) of Shiva is the kunda. In this kunda Kundalini Shakti lies in a sleeping mode like a bride – this kunda is Jivitakunda."

2.8 Maha-Shveta Shimul Tree

This ancient maha-shveta shimul (great white silk-cotton) tree was situated in the heart of the great cremation ground of Mahapith Tarapith. This ancient and gigantic tree was full of fruits and flowers, and many branches and twigs. Supremely sacred maha-shveta-shimul tree was one of the divine symbols of endless lila of Tarama. This Kalpa-Taru (wish-fulfilling tree) like maha-shveta shimul tree was alive for many ages. In Satya yuga, at the base of this specific maha-shveta shalmali tree, pupil of upper eye of Satidevi fell. This was subsequently converted into a divine stone-image, and was worshipped as Devi Aparajita Ugra-Tara. Thus, in many old Tantra scriptures like *Gupta Chinachara Tantra*, *Shalmali Dahan Tantra*, etc. this Kalpa-Taru like maha-shveta shalmali tree is mentioned with great respect:

> *"Dvarakayam purvabhage tatra tara adhisthita.*
> *Shilamayeti taddevi nivasan shalmali mule.*
> *Pratyaksham sarvayugesmin chandika sthiti sarvada."*
> – [*Gupta Chinachara Tantra*]
>
> – "Brahmamayi Taradevi resides in eastern part of Dvaraka River. Taradevi gracefully exists in the form of stone-image at the base of the shimul tree. She is manifested in all ages and always resides in the name of Chandika."

Again, at the foot of this shveta-shimul tree, pupil of upper eye of Satidevi fell. She is known as "Vikat" in Rahr (ancient name of the part of Bengal lying on the western bank of the Ganges river) area; She is concealed here. By chanting only 300,000 japas, one can attain siddhi.

This is described as:

"Radhe cha vikatakhyam dvaraka purva tiratah,
Shveta varnashcha shalmali vriksha tatra tale sthita.
Guptachinakhya mahatmye koved bhuvana eve,
Shila mayeti taddevi nivasan shalmali mule.
Urddhanetra patainava ugra tara shilamayi,
Lakshatraya prajaptena punara gamanam nahi."

Tara sadhak great sage Vashishthadeva was advised to go to Maha-Chin (great China) and learn Tara tattva and Chinachara (religious system of Tara sadhana practiced in China) directly from Buddha who was actually Sri Vishnu Janardana in disguise. To achieve siddhi, Sri Vishnu instructed him to perform sadhana at the base of maha-shveta shimul tree in accordance with Chinachara. He confirmed also that at the foot of maha-shveta shimul tree pupil of upper eye of Satidevi fell, and Ugra-Tara always gracefully resides here in the form of stone-image.

Listening to the advice of Sri Vishnu, Vashishthadeva went to Tarapith and attained siddhi by performing sadhana according to Chinachara. Stone-image (Shilamayi) of Brahmamayi Tarama, great stone (Maha-Shila) inscribed with the Lotus Feet of Mother Tara, and pillar-image (linga) of Chandrachuhra Shiva were existed initially at the base of this supremely sacred maha-shveta shimul tree.

In subsequent years after Vashishthadeva, great South Indian sadhak Kavindra Karnabharanam became unconscious by the sight of Brahma-Shila inscribed with Shripadapadma (Lotus Feet of Mother Tara). Later on, he attained siddhi at the base of the shimul tree. Two daughters of Karnabharanam, divine Tara and Hara, accepted Bhairava of Tarama Chandrachuhra Shiva who resided at the base of the maha-shveta shimul tree as husband and later absorbed into Him. In Kali yuga, Jaydatta merchant also saw the stone-image of Tarama, Brahma-Shila, and Chandrachuhra Shiva at the base of the maha-shveta shimul tree; and received the audience of Tarama and Her grace.

Pancha-mundi Asana

Under this maha-shveta shimul tree, below Shripadapadma of Tarama, there is an auspicious pancha-mundi (made of five skulls) asana (seat) of great sage Vashishthadeva. After returning of Taravidya siddha Vashishthadeva to his own home, in subsequent years, many thousand sadhakas and sadhikas attained siddhi by sitting on this auspicious asana. Eleven thousand Tantrik practitioners attained siddhi up to the existence of this tree. Some notable names among these siddha sadhakas are: Kavindra Karnabharanam, Jaydatta Banik, Bishe Khyapa, Yogindra Brahmachari, Devdayal Giri, Bhatu Goswami, Anandanath, Raja Ramkrishna, Second Anandanath, Kamalakanta, Khaki Baba, Vrajabasi Kailaspati, Kailaspati of Dabuk, Paramapurusha Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, etc.

In later period, foot of this great shimul tree became famous as "Shimultala". This Shimultala was the life-center of thousand and thousand of sadhakas and sadhikas. Particularly, this was life of the greatest sadhak Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Everybody is not worthy to sit on this great pancha-mundi asana of Vashishthadeva at Shimultala. Perfectly concealed Tara yantra (mystic geometric figures representing highly spiritual concepts) is inscribed on this siddha asana. Only really powerful and heroic Tara-sadhak could perform sadhana in this asana without any trouble by the grace of Tarama. Weak and unworthy sadhak could not only be a failure in attaining siddhi by performing sadhana at this great siddha asana, but also his sadhana will be destroyed by unnatural events. Thus, this siddha pancha-mundi asana established by Vashishthadeva is very alive and very violent. There is Tantra-based Sahasrar Lotus in this asana. If somebody performs sadhana on this great yantra without properly connecting Sahasrar with the Muladhar Chakra, there will be great harm instead of benefit. Thus, it is not possible to attain siddhi at this pancha-mundi asana unless sadhak is a true successor of Vashishthadeva.

This pancha-mundi asana is prepared with five skulls – one from dead human and other four from dead animals, but all deaths must be sudden or unnatural. In accordance with the *Yogini Tantra*, these five skulls must be from the following:

1. Human skull. This must be from low-caste person like Dome, Hari, Bagdi, etc.
2. Elephant skull (as a substitute, ox skull can be used).
3. Monkey skull.
4. Black owl skull.
5. Black snake skull.

In addition to aforesaid specific type of skulls, there are also other substitutes for pancha-mundi asana. However, in accordance with Tantra, skulls must be from suddenly or unnaturally dead human and animals. Associated with it, there is also a deep occultism prevailing in special lunar days with auspicious conjunction of stars and planets. This is well known to the powerful and competent Tantrik siddha sadhakas.

Many pancha-mundi asanas exist around of and about two miles from this famous pancha-mundi asana situated at the foot of the maha-shveta shimul tree of Mahapith Tarapith. On special lunar days with auspicious conjunction of stars and planets, puja and sadhana are performed at these pancha-mundi asanas. There is a hearsay that in later period, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa converted the pancha-mundi asana of Vashishthadeva into a lakshamundi (100,000 skulls) asana.

Siddhi at the Foot of the Maha-Shveta-Shimul Tree.

It is written in the *Gupta-Chinachara Tantra* about this very ancient maha-shveta shimul tree:

> *"Ekadasha sahasranam shalmali sthapyate yada,*
> *Vrikshachchhede sadhakaendre siddhirudra sahasrashah.*
> *Laksha sadhakah siddhistat kalou chamadhya bhagatah,*
> *Trilaksha sadhane siddhi mantrancha veda lakshma kah.*
> *Puja japa vidhanena tada siddhati sadhaka."*
>
> – "As long as this shalmali tree will alive, 11,000 sadhakas will attain siddhi. Later on, the person who is like the most siddha among lakshha sadhakas, will destroy this shimuul tree. In the middle of Kali yuga, one lakshma (100,000) sadhakas will attain siddhi at the foot of this maha-shveta shimul tree. Three laksha (300,000) japas with puja will bring siddhi."

Death of the Maha-Shveta Shimul Tree.

In later period, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa destroyed this maha-shveta shimul tree. It is very clearly mentioned in the *Shalmali Dahan Tantra* that in Kali yuga maha Tantrik Sri Sri Bamakhyapa will destroy this supremely sacred maha-shveta shimul tree.

In one night of Ashahr (June – July) in the year 1867 AD, thirty-year old maha-siddha Sri Sri Bamakhyapa set fire to the thorny hole of this very ancient maha-shveta shimul tree. This big tree was under fire for three days. Many people from far and away witnessed this fire. This maha-shveta shimul tree was gigantic in size; very big in cross-sectional area. The foot of this majestic tree was so big that even three adults with fully extended six hands could not cover its diameter. From a great distant place, even from Rampurhat, this sacred tree could be seen.

Sometimes before the destruction of this maha-shveta shimul tree by Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, this tree was emaciated. In this respect, there is hearsay that Kailaspati of Dabuk faced many troubles during sadhana at the foot of maha-shveta shimul tree. This disturbance created doubt in his mind about the fruitfulness of japa at this place. During this time of sadhana he became very ill due to contact with an unknown creature. Enraged by this incident, he cursed for emaciation of this shalmali tree. It is said that after this curse, the tree was emaciated. But in this respect, Kumarananda Swami, special blessed devotee of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, mentioned to Shastri Haricharan Gangopadhyaya, another disciple of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, that much before Kailaspati, this ancient maha-shveta shimul tree was emaciated.

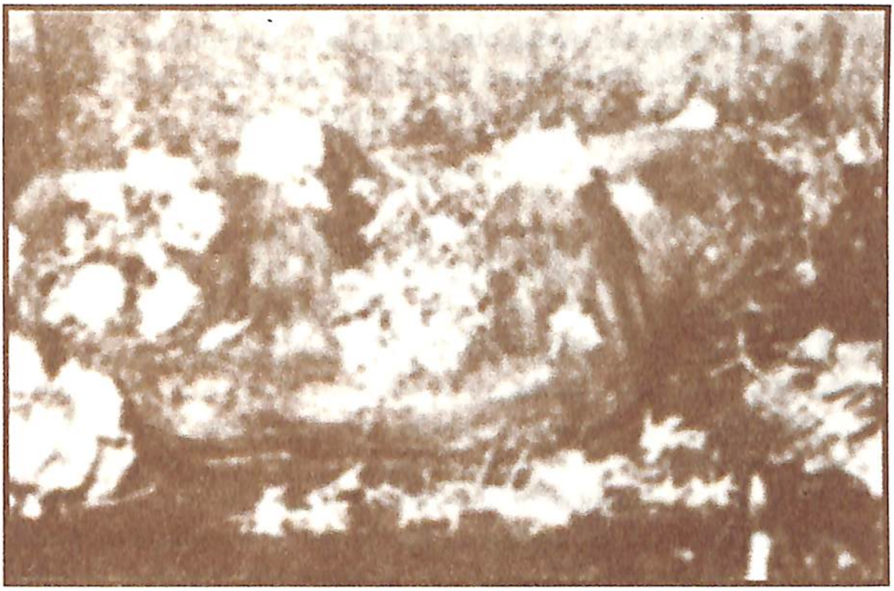
2.9 Sripadapadma of Tarama

Maha-Shila (majestic stone) with inscription of Sripadapadma (sacred Lotus Feet of Mother Tara) existed at the foot of the shimul tree in the maha-shmashana (grand cremation ground) of Tarapith. This Maha-Shila is worshipped for ages. In course of time, Sripadapadma at the foot of the maha-shveta shimul tree was distinctly identified as the life-center of the maha-shmashana of Tarapith. This Sripadapadma is indeed the original place of lila of Tarama in Mahapith Tarapith. It is the supremely divine place in which upper pupil of Satidevi fell in Satya yuga.

From Satya yuga to the middle of nineteenth century of Kali yuga, that is, before the destruction of maha-shveta shimul tree by Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, eleven thousand sadhakas attained siddhis at this sacred Sripadapadma of Tarama. In Bengali calendar month of Ashahr (June – July) of 1867 AD, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa destroyed the shimul tree. After that incident, innumerable sadhakas and sadhikas attained siddhi by performing intense sadhana in front of this Tarama's Sripadapadma, which was dear to Sri Sri Bamakhyapa like his own heart. At the direction of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, many of his ascetic and household devotees performed sadhana at this divine Sripadapadma and received grace and audience of Tarama.

Thus, this divine Sripadapadma has been marked as greatest spot of maha-siddhi and great heavenly lila of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Supreme sadhak Sri Sri Bamakhyapa mentioned again and again to his disciples about this Sripadapadma of Shimultala and daily divine lila of Tarama. After the death of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, many sadhakas and sadhikas attained siddhi by performing sadhana at this sacred Sripadapadma. It is mentioned in the *Gupta Chinachara Tantra* that up to the middle of Kali yuga, 100,00 sadhakas will attain siddhi.

After the destruction of the ancient maha shveta shimul tree by Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, this divine Sripadapadma was transferred to the foot of a sacred tree in Shimultala. In the year 1894 AD, some sadhus constructed a beautiful brick altar around this supremely sacred Sripadapadma. Later on, in the year 1911 AD, after the death of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, a small temple was erected at this place. This mid-size beautiful temple was constructed by the disciple of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, Rishikesh Chattopadhyaya. He erected also a tomb of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa by the side of Sripadapadma.



Sripadapadma of Tarama

This Sripadapadma of Tarama was dearest like heart to Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. His long sadhana, great siddhi, innumerable supernatural lilas, conducting initiation and showering of compassion, etc. – all were mainly performed around Sripadapadma. Actually, he spent all his life in complete unification with this sacred Sripadapadma which is nothing but living image of Tarama. Daily lilas of Tarama were executed in this holy spot in innumerable occasions along with Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Supreme holiness of this eternal and sacred Sripadapadma was always praised by Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Even after loss of his material body, many of his bodiless lilas were observed around this Sripadapadma. During his life time, he used to bring devotees to this Sripadapadma, and at first, he used to make obeisance with hearty tears of joy. Then, he used to say "My dear sons, look at this Shimultala, this asana of Vashishthadeva, and Tarama's Sripadapadma. Make obeisance." He told many times to the assembled devotees that Tarama gracefully resides at Shimultala; and even showed Tarama to some very fortunate persons.

At the end of his lila with mortal body, in accordance with his wish, he was buried facing towards north under a nim (margo) tree in the left side of the divine Sripadapadma. Even today, lilas of Tarama and Her ever-loving mad son Sri Sri Bamakhyapa are being performed – but "only some fortunate could view these."

2.10 Tarapith Maha-Shmashana

Characteristics of maha-shmashana in accordance with Tantra are:

> *"Pitham yathah shmashanatatra sanchintya tantra kalpadrumam smareth,*
> *Tanmule manipithancha nana mani bibhushitam.*
> *Nanalankarabhushadhyam muni devaishcha bhushitam,*
> *Shivabhirbahu mamsasthi medemanabhirastutah.*
> *Chaturddikshu shavamundachitangarabhi bhushitam,*
> *Tanmadhye bhavaeddevim yathokta dhyana yogata."*
> – [*Tantrasar*].
>
> -All of these Tantra based characteristics are present in Tarapith maha-shmashana. These are explained as below:

Extending little over two miles, this vast and terrible maha-shmashana is densely packed with innumerable very tall, gigantic, and ancient trees. This maha-shmashana is full of so many varieties of trees like shyaora, Indian fig, margo, jambu, etc. that even in day time, there are spots covered with dense darkness. Innumerable skulls, human skeletons, and human bones are scattered around the maha-shmashana. This is situated about 10 – 12 feet below the road. Cremation ground is quite extended from road to the bank of Dvaraka River. Even in day time, jackals and dogs fight over corpses. Many vultures also join that fight.

There is absolutely no doubt about this terribleness in night when maha-shmashana becomes horrible. In addition to foxes and dogs, free movement of abundant poisonous snakes makes the cremation ground very dangerous.

In this horrible atmosphere, appearance and disappearance of innumerable bodiless creatures make this scene more frightful. Nobody other than very daring sadhakas could enter into the maha-shmashana in dead of night. It is heard that even during day no one could enter alone into this almost dark maha-shmashana. People come here in groups for cremation of dead bodies; somehow, they would put fire in the mouth of corpse and leave the place immediately out of fear. Quite often, even in front of the followers of funeral procession, corpse-eating giant dogs and jackals start tugging of dead bodies. As soon as funeral followers leave maha-shmashana, jackals, dogs, and vultures would rip open the corpses. It is said that even tiger used to visit this maha-shmashana. In noon time, in this solitary maha-shmashana a deep silence frequently appears.

In this unnatural, intense, and soundless time disinterested calls from ravens from trees of ancient maha-shmashana could be heard; as if, mortality and temporariness of the whole worldly affairs could be expressed through this disinterested call.

Normally, eight to ten dead bodies are cremated daily in this maha-shmashana. From places around Tarapith, and many times even from far away places, dead bodies are brought to this sacred land of Tarapith to be in piece forever. Full compliance with the proper rituals of cremation might not be always followed. Many times, just after singeing the mouth of the dead at cremation, mourners bury the corpse under sand of cremation ground; this will fulfill the ritual of fire and also the wish of receiving shelter of holy land. However, generally for corpse, this shelter can not be secured for long time. Foxes, dogs, and vultures dig the soil and with loud noise eat that half-burnt dead body. Many poor people can not even arrange the cost of cremation; instead of burning with wood, they bury dead body under soil. As a result of this, a great feast is arranged for entertaining jackals, dogs, and vultures. Looking at this terrible end of jiva in maha-shmashana, men might not any more possess ego or maintain attraction for the materialistic world; quite naturally, this ignites the spirit of renunciation.

North-bound Dvaraka River flows in the western side of Tarapith maha-shmashana. According to Tantra, the shmashana situated in the bank of a river which is north-bound and also which has no high and low tides is destined to be maha-shmashana. Tarapith is that maha-shmashana where Dvaraka River is north-bound and there are no high and low tides in this river. Same situation is also applicable for great holy land Mahapith Varanasi – holy Ganges River is north-bound and flows by this side of the sacred land, and there are no high and low tides in this section of the Ganges. Manikårnika maha-shmashana of Varanasi is situated in the western side of Ganges.

When due to natural causes, dangerous diseases like cholera and small-pox spread as devastating epidemics, everyday from the neighborhood, 30 – 40 dead bodies are brought to this maha-shmashana for performing last rites in this mortal world. At this time, due to heavy seasonal rainfall, west and south sides of maha-shmashana are submerged under water by the flooded Dvaraka River; cremation activity is then performed in the older section of eastern side of the maha-shmashana; and in some situations dead bodies are buried under the ground. As a result of this, it can be noticed throughout the maha-shmashana that, on one side there are scattered items like coarse mats, cotton wrappers, improvised cots, cloths, and napkins used by the dead bodies; and on the other side skull, skeleton, and innumerable bones of dead bodies are scattered in an unnatural fashion.

Once upon a time, area of Tarapith maha-shmashana was vast; it was extended from Udaypur in the north to Kahrkahria in the south, and from Tarapur in the east to Kundala in the west.

We have already discussed at length about the ancient maha-shveta-shimul tree and Sripadapadma which were situated in the life-center of Tarapith maha-shmashana.

Divine Maha-Shmashana – Acting Place of Lilamayi Tarama.

This maha-shmashana of Tarapith is the eternal house of divine lila of Tarama. This super living maha-shmashana, by the wish of lilamayi (sporting) Tarama, can appear to be in any one of the following moods to the sadhakas:

Peaceful, violent, very violent, sweet, horrible, tender, silent, clamorous, beautiful, and extremely repulsive. Sometime this living place is filled up with wonderful sweet aroma. Again, in some other occasion, it is filled up with terribly bad odor; in that time, even very determined sadhak also is forced to abandon maha-shmashana.

In general, divinity of maha-shmashana is especially revealed during third, eighth, and fourteenth lunar day (tithi) of dark fortnight. In addition to these special days, divinity is also felt in some other lunar days. At the commencement of divinity expression of maha-shmashana, all animals like jackals, dogs, monkeys, etc. leave this maha-shmashana. Even many dedicated sadhakas have to leave under the influence of this supreme divinity. In the dead of night, when divinity of maha-shmashana is started to expose, then under a supernatural direction, whole maha-shmashana is filled up with deep silence after being absorbed by thick darkness. Maha-shmashana becomes so terribly reticent that no sound, even chirping of bird, could be heard. This unbearable super-speechlessness becomes so deadly that even serious sadhakas could not tolerate this and have to run away from the maha-shmashana. Few determined sadhakas, who could still sustain the spell of this speechlessness, would be severely disturbed by awful bad odor. This offensive smell is so terrible that it is impossible to bear by any common men; they have to give up asanas for the sake of saving their lives. Even with all these troubles, a very few fiercely brave sadhakas would continue their meditation and japa. For these higher level sadhakas, wonderfully exciting sweet aroma would be flooded. This sweet aroma is so pleasant that sadhak could be hypnotized and there will be a very strong tendency to divert his mind from the Lotus Feet of his Ishta deva or devi. After that, many frightful, charming, and temptation of enchanted plays would begin. This game is so dangerously effective that only few very powerful sadhakas can protect themselves from this influence. Then horrible play of bodiless would start. Appearance and sound of this play is extremely difficult to bear. Afterwards, Divine game would commence with multiple lights and radiance.

By the grace of Tarama, many deities and very few high level sadhakas and noble persons in astral bodies arrive to witness this magnificently beautiful divinity of maha-shmashana. It is a matter of great fortune to receive their audience. If some very blessed and highly fortunate spirited sons of Tarama, with utmost devotion and determination could remain united with Ishta, then only these devotees would be granted the audience of these deities and noble persons; this is not the only gain; by the blessing of compassionate Tarama, devotees would be also showered with supreme grace and blessings. Consequently, their hope of audience of Ishta gets accelerated.

It is heard that siddha sadhakas in Taravidya e.g. great sage Vashishthadeva, Dattatreya, Vrigu, Parashurama, Durvasa, etc. visit this maha-shmashana in radiant bodies to witness the divine play of Tarama and divinity of the maha-shmashana. Some high level sadhakas received their audience and grace; but this great fortune was possible for very few – not for all.

There is another characteristic of this most living maha-shmashana. As knower of Brahman has four states: childish, ghoulish, inactive, and mad; similarly, this maha-shmashana of Mahapith Tarapith has also four states. Depending on mood, this maha-shmashana gracefully becomes one of these - idle, mad, ghoul, and like child beyond limited three qualities – sattva, rajas, and tamas. In the day time, outwardly it looks like ordinary, but in special lunar days and also in some other auspicious occasions, this maha-shmashana displays its true nature; another living state is then manifested. This majestic maha-shmashana is then transformed into a divine living idol of Tarama. This was realized by many sadhakas during performing sadhana in this sacred maha-shmashana.

Tarapith maha-shmashana witnessed the divine lila, compassion, and super-human yogik power of incarnation of Shiva, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Even today, this very living and supremely sacred maha-shmashana gracefully exists as an eye-witness of his lila in bodiless form.

2.11 Holy Dvaraka River

Tarama is north-facing; the Dvaraka River and the sacred river the Ganges at Kashi are also north-bound. Mahapith Tarapith is situated on the eastern bank of north-bound Dvaraka River which is holy like the Ganges. The maha-shmashana exists at the eastern side of the Dvaraka River. In all festivals and auspicious puja occasions, people take bath and perform tarpan (libations of water to the names of deceased ancestors) in this Dvaraka River, and gain same benefits as performing similar activities in the holy river Ganges. This north-bound supremely holy Dvaraka River flows by the western side of Tarapith maha-shmashana. This sacred Dvaraka River is mentioned in the *Gupta Chinachara Tantra*:

> *"Pashchime cha shmashanam syat dvarakottara vahini,*
> *Tatravai snana danena gangasnana phalam labhet."*
>
> – "Taking bath in and offering to north-bound Dvaraka River, situated in western side of shmashana of Tarapith, one can gain the fruits of taking bath in the Ganges River." This is its outer appearance.

In its inward nature, the Dvaraka River is like Sushumna Nari (nerve channel); audience and touch of Brahmamayi Tarama in the form of Sahasrara Chakra (the thousand petalled spiritual center) could be experienced through submersion in this Sushumna.

This holy Dvaraka River, starting from the hills of Santal Pargana (area) flows in the eastern side, and after joining with the Mayurakshi River terminates in the Ganges River. For ages, as north-bound river around few miles of Tarapith, this holy like Ganges, Dvaraka River, has been flowing as messenger of the divine lila of Tarama. The tradition of this Dvaraka River is extraordinary. There is hearsay about tide of the Dvaraka River – only once in 20 years there is occurrence of huge flood in this river.

2.12 Puja and Festivals in Tarapith

Many pujas and festivals are celebrated throughout the year in the Mahapith Tarapith. Among these, greatest and also the oldest puja-festival is Tarapuja in the fourteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight on full Moon in Ashvin-Kartik (September – November) Kojagari Chaturdashi. It is said that great sage Vashishthadeva received audience of Universal Mother Tara on this very sacred Kojagari Chaturdashi day. Later on, on this same sacred lunar day, Jaydatta Banik, merchant of Ratnagar, received audience and grace of Tarama. Thus, for ages, in every year on this auspicious lunar day, Tarapuja has been celebrated with great pomp and splendour. In this great occasion of mahapuja, there is a huge arrangement of fair for seven days. On the night of Kojagari Chaturdashi, worshipping idol of Tarama is brought with great grandeur to resting place in the western side of the temple, and placing Her on a high altar, She is worshipped throughout the night. Thousands and thousands of sadhus, devotees, household men and women watch this spectacular scene. Entire Tarapith spends a sleep-less night on that day with great pleasure. In this occasion of Tarapuja, offerings are made to Tarama on behalf of rich devotees like landlords and kings from Birbhum, Murshidabad, Natore, etc.

She is worshipped in great style after decorating Her with numerous clothes and ornaments. Special puja is arranged on behalf of Bagdanga of Ehrole, Jemokandi, Nashipur, Dinajpur, Sapur, Maharaja of Natore, and Mallik family. These distinguished devotees have been serving Tarama for a long time.

Besides this grand Tarapuja, following festivals also are especially mentionable: Forward and reverse Ratha-Yatra (chariot riding) in the month of Ashahr (June – July), Janmashtami (birth day of Lords Sri Krishna), Ratantipuja (a kind of Kali puja), Jagaddhatri puja, Shivaratri (special puja of Lord Shiva in night), Dole-Yatra (Holi festival in spring time), and Ambarani. Also, special puja of Tarama is performed in eighth and fourteenth lunar days, full Moon, and Sankranti (last day of Bengali calendar month).

Approximately in the year 1776 AD, kaula sadhu Anandanath introduced puja of Tarama during the eighth lunar day and also at the end of each fortnight. On these auspicious occasions, in addition to puja, he arranged assemblage for religious discourse and practice. In subsequent years, Second Anandanath who was disciple of Anandanath, introduced celebration of festivals like Janmashtami, Ratha-Yatra, Holi, etc. in Tarapith to demonstrate that actually there is no fundamental difference between Shakta and Vaishnava. He was the principal organizer of religious gatherings of Shakta and Vaishnava sadhus. Approximately between between 1803 AD and 1813 AD, he initiated these celebrations. After his death in the year 1854 AD, his disciple's disciple, Mokshadananda, was selected as chief priest of Tarapith. In view of some people, he was the real introducer of Ratha-Yatra and Holi festivals in Tarapith.

Ratha-Yatra is celebrated with great splendour in second lunar day of bright fortnight in Bengali calendar month of Ashahr (June – July). Tarama or Mother Kali enjoys both forward and reverse Ratha-Yatra. This kind of extraordinary incident is indeed very rare in India. In lieu of Lord Jagannatha, Tarama rides in the chariot. In the land of Shakti, observing this practice of Vaishnavas demonstrates the unity of Shyam and Shyama. more surprising fact is that in Puri during Ratha-Yatra of Sri Sri Jagannatha, firstly Tarama is placed on the chariot of Subhadra; only after that, Ratha-Yatra of Jagannatha, Balarama, and Subhadra commences.

Ratha-Yatra of Tarapith is truly classical. There is a chariot of Tarama in the eastern side of maha-shmashana of Tarapith. Ratha-Yatra starts after decorating this chariot and putting idol of Tarama on it in the afternoon of the second lunar day of bright fortnight.

Countless devotees bring the chariot from Tara temple to maha-shmashana by pulling with great joy; chariot is again returned to its normal place at eastern side of Tara temple. During the life time of Parama-Purusha Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, Ratha-Yatra was celebrated in an extraordinary delightful way when along with innumerable devotees Sri Sri Bamakhyapa himself, under deepest ecstatic state, used to make wild dance at the front of the chariot. This incident reminds us of the action by Mahaprabhu Sri Sri Chaitanya who was performing similar unbounded dance under profuse devotion at the front of the chariot of Sri Sri Jagannatha in Puri. In later period, Shivaratri is also recognized as one of the very celebrated pujas in Tarapith. This is observed as a mark of great respect to the arrival day of the most glorious saint of Tarapith, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa.

2.13 Meditation and Hymn of Taradevi

Meditative form of savior, preserver, and destroyer of the universe Brahmamayi Taradevi is full of divinity. Sadhak and devotee should meditate Taradevi with utmost sincerity at the heart-lotus in the following form:

> *"Pratyalidhpadam ghoram mundamala vibhushitam;*
> *Kharvam lamvodarim bhimam vyaghra-chamravritam katou.*
> *Navayouvana sampannam panchamudra vibhushitam;*
> *Chaturbhujam lolajivham mahabhimam varapradam.*
> *Khargakatri samajukta savyetara bhujadvayam;*
> *Kapalotpala samyukta savya-panidvaya-nvitam.*
> *Pingograika-jatam dhyenmou-lavakshobhya-bhushitam;*
> *Valarka-mandalakara lochonatraya bhushitam;*
> *Jvalachchita-madhyagatam ghora-damshtryam karalinim;*
> *Suvesha-smeravadanam stryalankara vibhushitam,*
> *Chandra suryagni nayanam madyapana pramattikan.*
> *Vishva-vyapaka toantah shveta paristhitan."*
> – [*Tararahasyam*]
>
> – "Taradevi is in the standing posture with left leg in front and right leg in the back. She is in frightful appearance. She is adorned with a string of severed human heads. She is short in stature and Her belly is long. Her waist is covered with tiger-skin. She is in the prime of youth and displays five mudras (bodily gestures made by fingers) including Lelihan. She has four hands and Her terrible tongue is shinning like a flame. She is monstrous in one sense; but in another sense, She is endlessly graceful. She holds a large falchion and a cutting instrument in upper and lower right hand respectively; in Her left hands, She holds skull and lotus. Her top portion of the head is encircled by the sage

Akshobhya in the form of snake; and there is gracefully existent of a long matted hair of reddish-brown color. Her three eyes are very bright like morning Sun; She resides in the flaming funeral pyre. At the first sight, although She appears to be monstrous, Her face is always filled with sweet smile under ecstasy. She is nicely decorated with many women-likeable ornaments. Her three eyes are similar to Moon, Sun, and Fire. She is in intoxicated state by drinking wine. It is only She who pervades this whole universe."

Sadhakas should also meditate thinking that there are fifty empty (shunya) spaces in this great void of the vast akasha (grand space).

Taradevi pervades in five of these empty spaces:
"Akashasta mahakasham parakasham paratparam,
Tattvakasham suuryakasham akasham pancha-lakshanam."
– (*Akash Samhita*)

–"Akasha, Mahakasha, Parakasha, Tattvakasha, and Suryakasha – in these five shunya-akashas (five boundless empty spaces or infinity) Taradevi always gracefully resides."

Supreme power of Brahman or Para-Brahma-Swarupini Taradevi is also manifested in eight forms. These eight cosmic manifestations are:

"Tara chogra mahogra cha vajra neela saraswati;
Kameshvari bhadrakali itya-ashtyou tarini smrita."
– (*Maya Tantra*)

"Tara, Ugra-Tara, Maha Ugra-Tara, Vajra, Neela, Saraswati, Kameshvari, and Bhadrakali – these are eight forms of Tara."

Also, there are meditation, hymn, Gayatri (mystic japa mantra), kabacha (words having protective powers) etc. of these Ashta-Tara (eight forms of Tara). In accordance with *Tantrasara*, *TaraTantra*, *Tararahasya*, *Taranigam*, Yoga Scriptures, etc. daily meditation, hymn, and puja remove three afflictions (spiritual, material, and supernatural) of sadhak and he attains eternal lap of Mother Tara.

Similar to different hymn and meditation of Ashta-Tara, there are also sacred Gayatri mantras of Ashta-Tara. As there are different inner significances in the meditation of Gayatri – Brahmani (creator) in the morning, Vaishnavi (preserver) in the noon, and Rudrani (destroyer) in the evening – similar concepts are also noticeable in Tara Gayatri.

In this context, it is mentionable that:
"Kali tara mahavidya mahasiddhi pradayini,
Mahavidyasu sarvasu kalaou siddhir-nuttama."
– (*Tararahasyam*)

"In Kali yuga, Mother Kali and Mother Tara, only these two maha-vidyas bestow all maha-siddhis."

Therefore,

"Kalika taraka vidya kalou siddhi-samriddhida,
Duhkha vina prasidetam kalou jagaranantika.
Etebhyo muchyate deva taramantra shruto yadi,
Sarva-papoi-vrinirmuktah sarva-papa yutohapi sah."
– (*Tararahasyam)*

"In Kali yuga, Mother Kali and Mother Tara – these two

> maha-vidyas can certainly provide all siddhis. These two Devis in Kaliyuga are ever lively and gracefully exist in loving mood without giving any trouble. All sins are destroyed just listening "Tara" "Tara" mantra. Anybody can be relieved from the burden of all sins even if he has committed all kinds of vices of this world."

Brahma creates, Vishnu preserves, and Mahesvara destroys this universe by meditating that all-idealistic, all-liberator, eternal, universal, granter of eight siddhis, and salvation-provider Taradevi. Great Tantrik scriptures like *Taranigam*, *Maha-Chinakram*, *Tarakalpa*, *Rudrayamal*, *Tarasar*, *Tararahasya*, *Mahaneel*, *Tarakul Sarvasva*, *Shaktisar*, *Shoda Tantra*, *Yogashastra*, *NeelaTantra*, *Neel Saraswati*, etc. are full of praise for the glory of meditation and hymn of that primordial Brahmasanatani Taradevi.

The nobility of universal Savior and universal Mother is also expressed in Gayatri mantras of different forms of Taradevi, for example, Gayatri of Taradevi:

> *"AUM tara-ai vidmahe mokshada-ai dhimahi, tanno neele prachodayat."*

> Again, Gayatri of Ugratara is:

> *"AUM ugra-tare dhimahi, siddhisarevidmahe, tanno neele prachodayat."*

> Taradevi and Ekjatatara are identical; She is also Neel Saraswati Tara. Thus,

Gayatri of Ekjata-Tara and Neel Saraswati are same; for example:

"AUM neel saraswatyai vidmahe shritara-ai dhiimahi, tanno devi prachodayat."

Taradevi is also mahakal (timeless eternal) priya (darling).

Thus:

"AUM taraka-ai vidmahe mahakal priya-ai dhimahi, tanno shaktih prachodayat."

(In case of women and shudra (lower caste), it was a common practice to say "namah" instead of "AUM"). In this way, universal Mother Taradevi grants devotion, salvation, and eight siddhis to Her sadhakas and devoted children through different Gayatri mantras.

In addition to the aforesaid meditation, hymn, and Gayatri of Tarama, there are also Tara kabacha, Ugra-Tara kabacha, Kama kabacha, Mahakalpriya kabacha, etc. as helping materials for worshipping Ishta by devotees.

2.14 Story of Memorable Siddha Sadhakas

It is not possible to determine from time immemorial how many siddha men received grace of Tarama by performing sadhana in this holy land. However, in accordance with Tantra, eleven thousand sadhakas were enlightened during Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and up to beginning of Kali yuga. It is written in the *Shalmalidahan Tantra* that in Kali yuga Sri Sri Bamakhyapa would burn wishing-tree like maha-shalmali or great shimul tree situated in maha-shmashana of Tarapith. Also, in the *Gupta Chinachara Tantra*, it is clearly written that till the time of burning of shimul tree eleven thousand sadhakas and even after that incident till the middle of Kali yuga one laksha more sadhakas would attain siddhi. Therefore, according to the *Gupta Chinachara Tantra* number of memorable siddha sadhakas preceding Sri Sri Bamakhyapa should be eleven thousand.

Name and sadhana of this huge number of siddha sadhakas are now submerged for a long time under the abyss of oblivion. Quite a few yugas have been passed after the period of the great sage Vashishthadeva. Therefore, only a few names could be identified; and in this context following siddha sadhakas are especially mentionable:

Kamdev Tarkik, Yadavendra, Bishe Khyapa, Devdayal Giri, Yogindra Brahmachari, Bhatu Goswami, Anahari Baba, Anandanath, Raja Ramkrishna, Second Anandanath, Kamalakanta, Bishveshvar Bhattacharya, Mokshadananda, Ishan Bhattacharya, Khaki Baba, Kailaspati of Davuk, Jatababa, Vrajavasi Kailaspati.

All of these siddha sadhakas belong to the era prior to maha-sadhak Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. In the subsequent period starting from Sri Sri Bamakhyapa himself and his contemporary Panchanan Mishra, there were many sadhakas and sadhikas. Some notable names among them are:

Dayananda Saraswati, Lalit Gosai, Chakravarty Baba, Jatama, Ramgati Bandopadhyay, Alokananda, Napit Gosai, Sukhananda, Jangurubaba, Kalikananda Brahmachari, Tarakhyapa, Nigamananda, Anandamayima, Ramanath Aghoribaba, Bhairavdas Jnanananda, Varadakanta, Yogananda Baba, etc. We will discuss about them later in chronological order. In the subsequent sections we will focus on siddha sadhakas and sadhikas belonging to period prior to Sri Sri Bamakhyapa.

In this context it is mentionable that Virchandrapur, a place not far from Tarapith, is the birth place of Mahaprabhu Nityananda (a great Vaishnava sadhak); besides, Sri Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also visited Virchandrapur. Therefore, it is not impossible for them to visit Tarapith; rather it is quite expected; e.g. he visited Bakreshvar. ...3 first, master (Sri Sri Chaitanya) went to holy place Bakreshvar." Sri Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu visited twice this Birbhum – once in the year 1510 AD in the Bengali calendar month of Magh (January - February), and second time in the year 1513 AD. As far as it is known, in his first visit on the way to Gaur, he came to Virchandrapur at the age of 24.

2.15 Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra

Once two young ascetics, Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra, arrived at Mahapith Tarapith which is great holy land, supreme place of attaining siddhi, and also a champion of all Indian religious principles and practices.

Tarapith is not just an ordinary place of attainment of siddhi; the presiding deity of this traditional Mahapith is Tarama; with endless grace She meticulously makes all necessary arrangements as specifically required for attainment of Ishta by Her children. It can not be assured that all sadhakas visiting Tarapith will attain siddhi. There is a specific place destined for a specific person where all worldly acts will be consumed. Tarama with Her heavenly grace brings Her children under Her divine lap to that pre-selected specific place for performance of sadhana; after the end of successful sadhana She receives Her children in Her lap and grants vision and grace. She is the place, path, and also Ishta – everything for sadhak; She is beyond place and time; wheel of time is motionless at Her feet.

Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra arrived at Tarapith for sadhana; Tarapith is dearer than life to them. Ruling deity of their hearts is none other than Tarama. They were fascinated by the divine natural beauty of Tarapith. It was the end of seventeenth century and just the beginning of eighteenth. One of the free kings of Bengal, Raja Sitaram, was then ruler of Bhushana. Glory of Indian Mogal empire was at the declining stage like setting Sun. Foreign merchants, the English, were becoming prosperous through establishment of the East India Company; their fortune was flourishing like the rising Sun.

At this juncture of Indian history, Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra who were great devotees, firmly established in the renunciation path, ascetics, and practitioners of brahmacharya came to this supreme site of Indian spiritual heritage. Both were followers of the same path; their only goal in life was to receive audience and grace of Tarama. They were Tantriks according to family tradition; Shakti worship was their religious duty. They went to Tarapith due to its infallible attraction and started performing severe sadhana; their vow was - receiving audience of Tarama; otherwise giving up lives; this can be summed up in saying "do or die".

Full name of Kamdev Tarkik was Mahamahopadhyay Kamdev Tarkik. He belonged to special class of Bengali Brahmin called Rahri. Full name of Yadavendra was Yadavendra Ghosh. He was a distinguished Kulin belonging to Bengali Kayastha class. He was born at Bali village of Arambag subdivision in Hooghly district.

They started performing serious sadhana in Tarapith. As a result of sadhana for a long period of time, they could achieve various siddhis and became high level sadhakas; but they were completely absorbed with the noblest thought – when they could accomplish siddhi or the audience of universal Tarama? Both of them became terribly distressed and offered tearful prayers. At last, heart of Tarama was touched due to their serious sadhana and most sincere desire. They received divine command of Tarama – "Complete your sadhana at Saptashmashana (seven cremation-ground) of Champakdaha and pith of Kayra."

Path of salvation is predetermined according to activities of past lives – this fact is not unknown to savior Tarama. Therefore, accepting this divine command of Tarama both sadhakas left Tarapith for the Saptashmashana in Champakdaha.

Saptashmashana of the big lake Champakdaha and nearby Kali temple at the bank of Kumar River was quite famous at that time.

Champakdaha was under Bhushana territory and its new name is Champadaha and is situated at the Faridpur district of Bangladesh. The ruler of Bhushana was one of the free kings of Bengal, Sitaram. Great sadhak Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra arrived at the SriRanarangini temple in Bhushana. This fact is documented in the *Sankirtan Vandana*, written by Gorachand Goswami who was a descendant of Advaita Mahaprabhu:

> "*Two wise men Kamdev and Yadavendra*
> *Have arrived at auspicious time in Bhushana.*
> *Have taken shelter at Mother Shriranarangini temple;*
> *Like Sun and Moon have risen at the same time.*"
> – [*Sankirtan Vandana*]

Following divine direction of Tarama, Kamdev and Yadavendra started performing severe sadhana at Saptashmashana of Champakdaha. As the final stage of their spiritual accomplishment, they performed sadhana at the famous Kali temple (established by great sadhak Kalikananda Brahmachari) of Kayra, and achieved their desired full siddhi or maha-siddhi; they were gratified with the audience and grace of Tarama.

At that time in Bhushana, Gorachand Goswami of Advaita dynasty was head of the famous temple of Sri Sri Gopinatha. He was initiated by the great ṣiddha-sadhak Yadavendra and became his disciple.

Gorachand praised his guru Yadavendra in the *Sankirtan Vandana*:

> "*Guru Yadavananda is my glorious ascetic;*
> *....It is not known whether he is a Shakta or a Vaishnava.*
> *....Inside a Vaishnava but outwardly dresses like a Shakta;*

....Residing in Kalitemple sings glory of Krishna;
Bhushana has become a holy place."
– [*Sankirtan Vandana*]

After attainment of maha-siddhi, they worked for the public benefit and mass education. Their fame and superhuman power were spread far and wide. King Sitaram himself became their admirer; he made arrangement for their daily servicing and puja. It is written in the *Sankirtan Vandana:*

"*King Sitaram is fascinated about them;*
Every month provides rice, banana, and milk."
– [*Sankirtan Vandana*]

Madhav Biswas was a landlord in the vicinity of Champakdaha. Once he brought these two siddha-sadhakas in his Durga-Mandap (altar) place. Quite naturally, all villagers came to pay homage to them; among them was unmarried daughter of landlord Madhav Biswas. At the sight of Yadavendra, she modestly covered her head with veil and hurriedly left the Durga-Mandap; everybody was surprised. Asking her for this unusual behavior, daughter replied, "This (Yadavendra) is my husband for last seven lives." With great pleasure Madhav Biswas gave his daughter in marriage to superman Yadavendra; as dowry, he gave plentiful landed property (this land is now known as "Ghoshpur Mauja" in Bangladesh; his descendants live in that place even today).

After this, Madhav Biswas arranged another marriage – Kamdev Tarkik with Rangini Devi, daughter of his guru Kalisharan Bhattacharya. Kamdev settled in Mahishala village adjacent to village of Madhav Biswas; descendants of Kamdev still live in Mahishala village. Over time, powerful landlord Raja Sangram Saha and many other landlords and distinguished people received initiation from

Kamdev Tarkik. Even today, the sky-high pillar established by Sangram Saha is especially worth seeing.

For a long period of twenty-four years, large area of Champakdaha and Kayra was flooded with the spiritual stream due to Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra. Devotees, disciples, and pious people were charmed by witnessing their superhuman performance. This is beautifully described in the *Sankirtan Vandana*:

> "*World is charmed by observing their superhuman performance;*
> *Bhushana remains holy like Varanasi for twenty-four years.*"
> – [*Sankirtan Vandana*]

The specific places in Kayra where Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra performed sadhana are well recognized even today. In subsequent time periods, many sadhakas like Rama-Shyama, Ramdas, Devananda Avadhut etc. attained siddhi at these holy places.

One could notice endless grace of Tarama behind the following facts: Accepting the divine command of Tarama, retreat of Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra from the mid-level attainment of siddhi at Tarapith; settlement in Kayra for advance sadhana and attainment of siddhi in Tantrik path; living life of avadhut (anchorite) and preaching religion.

Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra did not want to waste any more time after the attainment of siddhi and conduction of mass education. Both of them started preparing for the final journey (death). Unattached to the mortal body, these two great siddha persons were very eager to go back to eternally peaceful lap of universal Mother Tara. They selected the exact time and date of death and also joyfully informed this to all – it is like sons living abroad for a long time want to return with great delight to their own parents. Countless devotees, disciples, and admirers of Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra were shocked on hearing the vow of death. Even with intense solicitations, nobody could change their determination.

Funeral pyre of big size and great height was prepared; for seven days, a huge crowd consisting of few thousand devoted men and women was gathering to witness this supernatural event. It is indeed rare to find that somebody could fix in advance the time and date of death and would willfully prepare to die in the blazing funeral pyre. At the pre-determined time in front of the huge crowd, garlanded Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra mounted over the burning funeral pyre.

Super-joyful and completely absorbed in divine thoughts of Ishta Devi Tarama, Her favorite son Kamdev Tarkik started walking around after entering into flaming funeral pyre. In response to cry and deep lamentation of the witnessing crowd, he said with a tone of assurance:

> *"We will take birth again in two different families;*
> *Do not forget that we will preach again the principle of sadhana."*

Kamdev Tarkik returned to the lap of Tarama by discarding the mortal body. After Kamdev, Yadavendra entered into burning funeral pyre with a smiling face; atmosphere was charged with loud cry of the crowd; after a while funeral pyre was extinguished; but what a surprise! Everybody noticed that there was no trace of gross body of Yadavendra.

Gorachand Goswami wrote:

"*Yadavendra left this world in bodiless form using the yogik power;*
Senseless Gora is left behind; for what sin you could not die?"
– [*Sankirtan Vand*ana]

With the help of yogik power, supreme yogi Yadavendra converted back gross mortal body to its constituents - five elements (earth, water, heat, air, and atmosphere or space). With eternal joy he returned to the lap of Tarama. The great sadhana, commenced at Tarapith, ended in the sacred land of Bhushana. Darling children of Tarama returned back to Her eternal lap.

In course of time, by the wish of Tarama, prediction of Kamdev Tarkik was completely materialized. In the nineteenth century, in the dynasty of super siddha sadhak of Kamdev Tarkik, great sadhak Mahamohopadhyay Shivachandra Vidyarnava was born. In second volume of Mahapith Tarapith we will discuss about this Tantra siddha superman who was the writer of the famous book "*Tantra Tattva*".

Also, in the nineteenth century, as sixth descendant of Yadavendra, great anchorite Bhulua Baba was born. In fourth volume of Mahapith Tarapith we will discuss about this great Mother worshipper, famous religious speaker, and writer of the "*Sri Sri Kalikulakundalini".*

Great saints Kamdev Tarkik and Yadavendra returned back to this mortal world in new bodies – as Shivachandra Vidyarnava and Bhulua Baba respectively. The story of their rebirth and history of their sadhana are also wonderful and charming. For the aforesaid stories, the writer (Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay) is grateful to eldest son of Bhulua Baba, Sri Kamalakanta Ghosh who is a sadhak, devotee, and blessed child of Tarama.

2.16 Bishe Khyapa

About 280 years before, there was a great and powerful siddha sadhak in the name of Bishe Khyapa in Tarapith. At that time Tarapith was the greatest centre of Indian Bhakti sadhana. There was a continuous flow of high-level sadhakas and scriptural teachers from different places of India to Tarapith. This Bishe Khyapa is not the "Dak Purusha" Bishe Pagal (mad). Bishe Khyapa was known to be a great Kaula and very powerful sadhak.

Bishe Khyapa received endless grace of universal Tarama after performing Kaula sadhana for a long time. It is said that he was equally proficient in Yoga and Tantra. He performed serious sadhana for a long time in the majestic maha-shmashana of Tarapith. He acted also as a successor to many sadhakas. Even today, story of his superhuman power is heard in the social life of people around Tarapith. His bright name is unforgettable to sadhakas of Tarapith. Approximately in the year 1723 AD Bishe Khyapa appeared in Tarapith.

2.17 Anandanath

Subsequent to Bishe Khyapa, about two-hundred and thirty years ago, there was a siddha Kaula sadhak in Tarapith. He was a very high-level Tantrik. In his time, during approximately 1776 AD, Maharaja of Natore Ramkrishna Raya, came from his estate Bonehat village of Birbhum to Tarapith to visit Tarama. Afterwards, he visited Tarapith many times for performing sadhana. Also, he made arrangement of servicing Tarama and included Tarapith in his estate. During many visits to Tarapith by Ramkrishna Raya, he was intimately acquainted with siddha Kaula Anandanath. Anandanath gave him instruction on many secret principles and practices of Tantra. Later, following divine command of Tarama, Ramkrishna Raya went to Bhavanipith (place where pupil of right eye of Sati fell) for performing Tara sadhana and made sadhak Anandanath as the head of Tarapith temple.

Great sadhak and temple-head Anandanath introduced special puja of Tarama in Tarapith on the eighth lunar days and end of the fortnights. Additionally, he organized seven-day fair, religious conference, and scriptural discussion for the assembled devotees and pilgrims during the most majestic yearly puja in Tarapith on the fourteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight. In the subsequent period after Anandanath, this tradition of religious conference and scriptural discussion is almost lost.

2.18 Maha-Sadhak Raja Ramkrishna

Raja Ramkrishna, king of Natore, is one of the great among all sadhakas who received grace of Tarama by performing sadhana in Tarapith. Subsequent to battle of Palashi, this bright star in the world of Bengali Shakti sadhana was illuminated. He was born in the year 1739 AD in a distinguished Brahmin family at Aat village under Rajshahi (now in Bangladesh). Father Haridev Raya was a very pious Brahmin and was related to the king family of Natore. His youngest son was this extraordinary Mother worshipper and royal ascetic Ramkrishna Raya.

Ever memorable Rani Bhavani, queen of Natore and owner of half of Bengal, adopted Ramkrishna when he was just a boy. Even as a young man, Ramkrishna was extremely eager for Shakti sadhana; vast wealth and great respect could not change his mind; he was gradually attracted towards religious life. Observing his tendency for detachment, Maharani Bhavani got him married quickly, and to ensure continuity as a family man she herself initiated him. But in spite of these efforts, he preferred to remain indifferent to wealth and gradually started entering into the world of sadhana.

Only for namesake he had been supervising affairs of the state; appearing in the royal court he had been donating money, food, clothing, and land to poor persons, sadhus, ascetics, and fakirs (mendicant ascetics); divisions after divisions had been getting auctioned; but these earthly matters could not at all bother Raja Ramkrishna. He would become very happy in serving poor as personified God. Even in the busy schedule, sometimes he used to visit Jaykali temple for sadhana, visit to Kiriteshvari temple, and even visit to cremation ground of Bagsar; his aspiration for sadhana had been just increasing over time.

Quite often, he had been visiting Jaykali temple of Natore and immersed in deep meditation of Mahadevi Jaykali; sometimes for performing sadhana he had been visiting living Shaktipith of Devi Aparna of Bhavanipur. Located by the bank of Karatoya River near Natore, pupil of the right eye of Satidevi fell in this super living Shaktipith in Baguhra. Devi Aparna is famously known as "Ekjata Tara". Mother worshipper Raja Ramkrishna used to call Mahadevi Aparna as "Ma Bhavani". As a result of this, his people and other devotees also started calling Mother Aparna as "Ma Bhavani". Consequently, over period of the time, Devi Aparna has become famous as only "Bhavani". In the name of Mahadevi Bhavani this Satipith is now known as Bhavanipur.

In the midst of these circumstances, in the year 1776 AD. at the age of thirty-seven years, Raja Ramkrishna came to Tarapith while visiting Bonehat estate in Birbhum. Following hearsay has been prevailing from generation to generation about his remarkable visit to Tarapith:

Taking advantage of the great nobility of Raja Ramkrishna, many mean minded persons pretending as pious had been hanging around him. This made his wife (rani or queen) very angry and she became a little tough on him. She advised her great ascetic husband to be strict and practical. This created a difference of opinion between Raja Ramkrishna and his rani. In a very offended state of mind he told rani that he would leave and never return to Natore; but rani did not make any response to his remark. With a deep sense of sorrow and sensitiveness he arrived at Tarapith and started performing sadhana at Tarama's temple. On one night during dark fortnight, he felt that glorious and divine image of Tarama having four hands stood before him in the form of his queen. Raja Ramkrishna was astonished by witnessing this supernatural form. At this divine moment he heard an oracle: "Ramkrishna, go back to Natore; pacify rani; rani herself is the Devi of that pith."

Next day Raja Ramkrishna returned to Natore. Then rani advised him to avoid virachara (left-handed Tantrik path) sadhana; that is why Raja Ramkrishna changed course of sadhana in the middle of his spiritual journey. He visited Tarapith many times in the later periods. Raja Ramkrishna received many deep and secret principles and practices of Tantra sadhana from the temple head of that time great Tantrik Anandanath. For some time he performed sadhana in the maha-shmashana of Tarapith. It is said that under the guidance of Anandanath he performed purashcharan act (worship of deity with a view to attaining some end). In the mean time, he exchanged his Bonehat estate from Pathan king Alilaki Khan to gain Tarapith; and arranged daily service and puja of Tarama by including it for ever as a part of Natore kingdom. Raja Ramkrishna made his guru great Tantrik Anandanath as head Kaula of Tarapith. Hereafter, Raja Ramkrishna went to adjacent to Natore the Satipith Bhavanipur and started performing sadhana of Devi Aparna or Ma Bhavani. This super-sacred Satipith is situated near Chandaikona on the bank of Karatoya River in Baguhra district. This is now under Bangladesh. Go from Goalanda to Sirajganja by steamer, and then about sixteen miles away this Bhavanipur Satipith can be reached. Raja Ramkrishna performed sadhana at this place for a long time. He donated land worth about ten thousand Indian Rupees (present value must be much more) for servicing Ma Bhavani. Also, made arrangement of servicing Ma Bhavani as a permanent responsibility of Natore estate. He made all-round improvement of Bhavanipur; executed construction of many temples; excavated ponds, built houses for sadhus and ascetics, prepared places for performance of sadhana, and arranged distribution of daily prasad (food becomes prasad after acceptance by deity; thus prasad is a highly respected food for devotees).

News about profound nobility, kindness, and generosity of Raja Ramkrishna were reached to the Muslim emperor of India at Delhi. Emperor decorated him with the title of "Maharajdhiraj

Prithvirajbahadur"; but he was then in a state beyond of this mortal name and fame.

Raja Ramkrishna prepared four panchamundi asanas in Bhavanipur for sadhana:

- First was prepared near Bhavani temple at the foot of a tamarind tree on the western side of Kalikumar Lake.
- Second was prepared on the western side of the Bhavani temple at the foot of a banyan tree.
- Third was prepared on the specific place where human sacrifice was supposed to be conducted.
- Fourth or last one was prepared on the field in the eastern side of the temple i.e. at the foot of a keli kadamba tree.

There is a dual-pond on the eastern side of the Ma Bhavani temple. Raja Ramkrishna excavated this dual-pond and planted bakul trees around it. Bakul garden is on the eastern side of the pond; its name is Anandakanan. In this beautiful Anandakanan, everyday in the afternoon, Raja Ramkrishna used to conduct religious discussions along with sadhus and ascetics; many enlightening discussions on principle of sadhana were being discussed in that place.

Then, for attainment of siddhi, he started performing severe sadhana by sitting on panchamundi asanas. Once, while he was performing sadhana by sitting on third panchamundi asana, for some reason, there was a disturbance in his sadhana; messenger of Lord Shiva lifted him from third panchamundi asana and threw him on the fourth panchamundi asana. As a result of this incident, he broke his two legs and he was brought from Bhavanipur to Baranagar of Murshidabad at the bank of River Ganges.

At this time, Raja Ramkrishna became a celebrity by writing many famous songs. He was not only a Shakta sadhak and royal-ascetic but also a great musician; in one, he was a lyric poet, a composer, and also a singer. Many of his Shyama Sangits (songs specifically written to praise and glorify Mother Kali and Tara) have been entertaining cultural and religious lives of Bengali people for hundreds of years with great honor. Subsequent to his time, his divine Shyama Sangits inspired many India famous Shakti sadhakas; Specifically, in nineteenth century, Sri Sri Ramkrishna, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa etc. were greatly influenced by his songs; in numerous occasions, they became entranced by listening to his Shyama Sangits. Following are some examples of wonderful songs written by Raja Ramkrishna:

1. "*He is sure to be blissful in the world*
   Who knows the blissful Mother Goddess;
   He does not care to go on a pilgrimage
   And nothing hears other than words about Kali;
   Does not care for evening prayer or puja rituals,
   His mind is full of only thought that Kali will do the needful.
   Whoever takes shelter in Kali's feet,
   He can easily forget the earthly interests;
   He can also reach to shore of this oceanic world,
   Tell me how can you lose this basic thought?
   Ramkrishna says to that kind of person,
   Why to bother for people's slanderous comments,
   When in day and night eyes are heavy with intoxication
   By drinking Nectar of Mother Kali's name."

2. "*Distress-Savior, Sin-Prohibitor,*
   Holder of three qualities - sattva, rajas, and tamas,
   Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer,

All-form possessor -- with and without attributes;
You are Kali, Tara, and Supreme Nature,
You are Fish, Tortoise, and Bore etc (of Vishnu incarnations),
You are land, water, fire, and air;
You are the sky, progenitress of Vyomkesh (Shiva),
Samkhya, Patanjal, Mimamsak, and Nyay;
You deserve to be meditated upon with through knowledge and remembrance;
I have reached at the end in understanding of puzzle of Vaisheshik and Vedanta,
Even then, till today, You are not known.

You are beginningless and formless, but for the benefit of sadhakas
Takes five forms like Ganesh etc., removes worldly fears, and exists in all ages.
To an idolator You are an Idol, to a form-less worshipper a Form-less;
Some say You are Glorious Brahman, and Mother – You are that mountain- daughter.
As long as anybody has a motive, he calls You as Supreme (Para) Brahman;
Thereafter, only fourth stage of indescribability and whole universe is just Tarama."

3. "*Even now Brahmamayi*
Is it not up to Your satisfaction!
For an unworthy child
How much do You want to deprive?"

4. "*If my mind forgets You,*
Then laying me on sand bed, name of Kali

Be told in the root of my ear.
This body does not belong to me,
And it follows the inherent vices;
O Bhola, bring the rosary,
Let me float on the Ganges water."

At a great auspicious moment, at the bank of the Ganges near Baranagar, keeping future sadhak Bholanath at his side, and performing continuous japa with the rosary, Raja Ramkrishna returned to the divine lap of Universal Mother Tara. At this time, a magnificent light escaped from his body and traveled towards grand space for dissolution. In the year 1794 AD, only at the age of 55 years, this great royal-ascetic bid farewell to this mortal world. He left behind his dearest queen who was born out of Devi, and his two sons under the secured care of Tarama. Queen spent her last leg of life in Kashi and at the end united at the feet of Lord Vishvanatha. At her death, people at every-level cried by saying "We have lost our mother". She was distinctly identified in Kashi as Second Annapurna. In later period, eldest son of Raja Ramkrishna took care of servicing of deities of Natore belonging to Vaishnavas sects and was known as Bahra Taraph (the elder side); and the youngest son accepted responsibility of servicing deities belonging to Shaktas (servicing of deities in temples like Tarapith, Bhavanipur, and Jaykali etc.) and was called as Chhoto Taraph (the younger side).

In Kali yuga, in one and the same person, magnificent combination of so many prime qualities – king, ascetic, song writer, composer, singer, and also a grand donor has never been noticed in Bengal or India. His heroic sadhana and excellent devotional songs have inspired many India famous Shakti sadhakas. In the legacy of sadhana and servicing of Tarapith, name of royal-ascetic Ramkrishna has been inscribed in golden letters to shine forever.

2.19 Devdayal Giri

Subsequent to Ramkrishna, Devdayal Giri is a memorable name in the history of sadhana in Tarapith. This worshipper of Shiva-Shakti received the grace of Tarama by performing sadhana for a long period of time at the famous cremation ground of Tarapith. He was powerful like a superhuman person; even today there is hearsay about his power and sadhana.

Although Devdayal Giri was basically a part of Giri sect, he performed a severe sadhana in this Shakti pith to receive rare audience and grace of Tarama. Performing sadhana for a very long time without caring for all intimidations of the grand shmashana of Tarapith, at last, he attained the desired objective. Also, he received divine audience of Tarama and Her endless grace.

It is heard that he became an extraordinary respectful person by receiving grace and audience of both Shiva and Shakti. In addition, he acquired unlimited yogik power. Throughout his life, he bountifully gave away this super power to his disciples and devotees to help them to progress in sadhana.

2.20 Yogindra Brahmachari

Yogindra Brahmachari is quite well-known as one of the powerful sadhakas in Tarapith. There are also many stories about his power. He was a very high level and strict brahmachari (absolute restrained life without any sexual activity) and powerful sadhak. In those days, tradition was that young men, after completion of religious studies at the abode of guru and receiving guidance of sadhana, were not to go back home and enter into married life; instead, he was to become a brahmachari for good and follow the path of renunciation along with his guru. For example, in eighteenth century, guru Bhagaban Ganguli with his two brahmachari disciples, Lokenath Brahmachari of Baradi and Madhavananda, accepted the path of sadhana by renouncing the world; indeed, this path is not easy, it is very tough. However, great sadhak Yogindra Brahmachari was gratified to receive audience of Tarama by performing sadhana in Tarapith; also, he was awarded with the great honor of siddha man.

2.21 Bhatu Goswami

The special name that is distinctly memorable in the world of sadhana in Tarapith after Bishe Khyapa, Anandanath, Raja Ramkrishna, Devdayal Giri, and Yogindra Brahmachari is Bhatu Goswami. This great sadhak attained realization by performing severe sadhana without any break for a long time in the maha-shmashana of Tarapith; he received audience and grace of Brahmamayi Tarama who is embodiment of unity between Shyam and Shyama. He was a very powerful sadhak. The tale of his super-natural power has been prevailing among sadhakas for a long time.

In this context, it is mentionable that Tarapith is that kind of grand place of realization, where for ages, creeds of Shakta, Shaiva, Brahma, Vaishnava, Baul and other religious sects have been assimilated; not only there is sweet unification of all religious ideas but also there is grand synthesis of all personal Gods, which is not seen in many holy places of India. This Mahapith Tarapith is a very special place of attainment and land of grand assimilation; thus, although Bhatu Goswami was a Vaishnava, follower of Radha-Krishna, he performed sadhana in Shakti pith Tarapith and realized Shyam; thus, Tara or Supreme Vaishnavi Shyama gratified him by disclosing her another form – Shyam.

2.22 Anahari Baba

Anahari baba is well known among super level sadhakas of Tarapith. He became siddha by performing severe sadhana without taking any food for a long time. Because of fasting, in the course of time, he was identified by the people as Anahari Baba. There are many astonishing stories about him. He was indeed a very powerful siddha sadhak.

There is hearsay that Anahari Baba could maintain fasting day after day or month after month without developing any physical weakness. He had a very sound health and strong body. Technique and power to fast are completely under control of Indian sadhakas and yogis; this technique can be acquired by Hatha Yoga (performing yogic poses) and Raja Yoga (arresting the faculty of mind). However, it needs the proper guidance from the siddha yogi guru. There are many sadhakas and sadhikas in India who have not taken any food for many years (even more than one hundred years). We will discuss about these great souls in appropriate time.

2.23 Second Anandanath

After First Anandanath, his disciple took the name of Second Anandanath. Also, he acquired the chief Kaula position of his guru First Anandanath. He was also a super Tantrik and powerful sadhak. In about 1801 AD, sadhak Kamalakanta came to Tarapith for Shakti sadhana. At that time, he learnt many secret principle and practice of Tantra from the chief Kaula Second Anandanath. It is said that first time alone and thereafter with wife, he performed sadhana for about four years in Tarapith under the direction of Tantrik guru Second Anandanath, and he received the audience and grace of Tarama. Second Anandanath made it clear to Mother worshipper and devotional singer Kamalakanta that there is no need for renunciation to perform Kaula sadhana; one can achieve siddhi by performing sadhana with wife. Accordingly, Kamalakanta did follow the advice. Afterwards, as a result of his sadhana of Tarama in Tarapith, Kamalakanta was distinctly recognized as a very powerful sadhak.

Under great encouragement and immense inspiration from Second Anandanath, Kamalakanta composed many Shyama Sangits and used to sing in front of Tarama to please both Tarama and his guru. Second Anandanath made lot of repair and re-constitutional works in Tarapith. Also, he encouraged people to understand the unity of Shyam and Shyama, and took great initiative to preach and spread the message of Kaula sadhana of Tarapith. In the year 1854 AD, at quite old age, Second Anandanath found resting place forever in the eternal lap of Tarama.

2.24 Kamalakanta

Among the glorious sadhakas who received audience and grace of Tarama by performing sadhana in Tarapith, one of the greats is super Shakti sadhak and Tantrik Kamalakanta Bhattacharya of Bengal. In the year 1770 AD, this saint was born at Ambika Kalna in Burdwan district of Bengal. His father was Maheshvar Bhattacharya and Mother was Mahamaya Devi; both of them were very pious people.

Since his childhood Kamalakanta had a melodious voice. With heart and soul Kamalakanta used to sing devotional songs of Ramprasad (famous Bengali Shakti sadhak and great composer of Shyama Sangits). Due to poverty, Kamalakanta had to stay in his maternal uncle's house from very early on. Teenaged Kamalakanta used to sing in front of deity Shyamama in the famous Vishalakshi temple of Channa. At this time, he took some lessons of music from his relative Kenaram Mukhopadhyay; basically, he studied music in the category of Tappa (a light classical variety of amorous songs); in subsequent years, the specific influence of Tappa could be noticed in his style of music. In adolescent age, he received initiation from Prabhupada Chandrasekhar Goswami.

Observing the gradual increase of renunciation tendency, mother Mahamaya Devi got him married; but after a short while, his first wife died. Respecting intense desire of mother, young Kamalakanta married for the second time; but he did not like to follow the usual worldly life; he became desperate for the audience of Shyamama. At this critical moment, he was initiated in Shakti mantra by the super sadhak and distinct Kaula Kenaram Chattopadhyay. After his initiation, at the strict direction of guru Kenaram, he decided to continue sadhana of Mother while maintaining the worldly life. With strong determination, he was continuing to perform severe sadhana and also at the same time composition of Shyama Sangit.

In about the year 1801 AD, he came to Mahapith Tarapith to perform Shakti sadhana. At that time chief Kaula of Tarapith was the super Tantrik Second Anandanath. Living under the care of Second Anandanath for a long period of four years, Kamalakanta acquired secret knowledge of Kaula sadhana. Realizing that in this Kaula sadhana there is no need of renunciation of the world, Kamalakanta brought his second wife in Tarapith from Channa village of Burdwan and together performed sadhana for quite some time. At last, he received grace of universal Mother Tarama, and at the instruction of Second Anandanath he went back to Channa village with his wife.

Now, a new life had commenced; on one hand, composition of songs continued, though on the other side there was severe poverty. Universal Mother Tarama started playing with sadhak Kamalakanta. He was living under half or full starvation with wife and children; even then, there was no stoppage of sadhana and composition of songs. Tantra sadhana and song composition, both were continuing at the same time. He was initiated in both Vaishnava and Shakta traditions; therefore, due to this grand synthesis of two types of initiations, he could compose Shyama Sangits glorifying unity between Shyam and Shyama and also infusing secret concepts of Shaktism. Gradually, his reputation was spreading far and wide. He was about forty years old (year 1810 AD) when his fame of sadhana and songs reached to a height of extraordinary level.

Once, while returning to Channa with lots of puja items from the house of his disciple, Kamalakanta was captivated by a group of dacoits in Owr village. Dacoits decided to kill him after robbing. Kamalakanta disclosed his true identity, but dacoits did not believe him. They said: "if you are really the "Kamalakanta", then sing a song." Kamalakanta started singing Shyama Sangit remembering name of Mother Vishalakshi; dacoits were listening with full attention."

"O Three –eyed, what is the nature of Your compassion
Is now revealed through me.
If man gets salvation by his own virtue,
Then where is Your glory?
O Mother, while I have been conducting a path of virtue without bhakti;
I am a low-grade devotee, to save my soul
Primordial Shakti - You have not used Your own shakti (power).
Desire of renunciation was in mother's womb,
But now it is lost in this world.

Mother, to offer and wash Your feet
Was the desire of my mind.
How can I worship if bhakti is not granted! How can I be attracted if You do not attract!
Does puja mean just offering with leaf of bel tree? Passions have become enemies at all times;
So far they have been controlled by Shiva,
But now, if Shiva does not keep His promise,
Blaming Shiva and begging You is of no use;
For nothing, I cry with the name of "Durga".
Suffered enough in this world, also deprived from happiness beyond death,
By the wish of God, there is no salvation of the wicked sinner."

Dacoits were charmed by hearing this divinity soaked sweet song; all including chief of the dacoits were moved; they decided not to kill him. In response to their earnest request, particularly from the chief, Kamalakanta sang another magnificent Shyama Sangit:

"Mother Shyama, I have no wealth

Except your bright feet;
Even these are also taken away by Tripurahri (Shiva);
Hearing this I have lost my courage.
Relative, friend, son, and wife –
They are just for good times;
In need, none will be found;
Home and house are useless like dry land of Owr village.
Protect me with Your noble quality, bestow mercy on me;
(Otherwise), realizing You with japa
Is just waste.
Kamalakanta expresses his mental anguish to Mother,
Let my rosary, bag, and garment
Hang in the meditation room."

When this extraordinary devotional song was sung with heart and soul by the possessor of sweet voice and great Shakti sadhak Kamalakanta, dacoits including chief could not control themselves any more. All of them with tearful eyes surrendered to the lotus feet of Kamalakanta and begged his pardon. They returned all puja items and even carried these on their heads to house of Kamalakanta. Also, chief along with the whole group of dacoits received initiation from the great sadhak Kamalakanta, and gave up robbery for good to follow a virtuous life.

At this period of time (year 1810 AD), Maharaja of Burdwan Mahatabchand Tejachandra Bahadur was fascinated by the divine Shyama Sangit and super natural power of Kamalakanta. He brought Kamalakanta to Kotalhat and adopted him as his guru. Also, he made arrangement for Kamalakanta's accommodation with his whole family at Kotalhat. Kamalakanta established Shyama idol of Vishalakshi in Kotalhat; in course of time, this idol became alive by the majestic power of his sadhana. Under the direction of his guru, Tejachandra started performing sadhana. Prince Pratapchand also received initiation from Kamalakanta.

As a disciple of Kamalakanta, Maharaja of Burdwan, Mahatabchand Tejachandra, also became very proficient song writer; following is an example of sweet Shyama Sangit, composed by him:

"Who is this blue-colored Moon
Wearing a string of severed human heads?
She resides in Shiva's heart with leg position of an archer
As a four-handed woman holds weapons in all hands,
Wears a blue lotus on forehead, and is dressed in tiger skin;
She is pot-bellied, short, and frightful with greedily lolling tongue;
Has yellowish-brown matted hair, serpent dangles on Her head with expanded hood.
My humble request to the world-saver Moon - I am lost with philosophical knowledge,
Mother Tara, with Your compassion please end my worldly sufferings."

Above song, composed by sadhak, devotee, and composer Mahatabchand Tejachandra is a glorious example of description of the Tantrik image of Tarama. It is not difficult to imagine, he visited Mahapith Tarapith, the land of sadhana of his guru Kamalakanta, and after viewing the idol of Tarama, the presiding deity of Tarapith, composed this majestic song under deep inspired state.

Gradually, the supernatural yogik power of Kamalakanta was introduced even to common people beyond just his disciples and devotees. At that time, talent of his song composition also reached to the highest level. His composition "*Sadhakranjan*" has been clearly identified as a book of great devotional and magnificent songs. In addition, he composed a variety of many other sangits (songs): Shyama Sangit, Krishna Sangit, Shiva Sangit, Samar (war) Sangit,

Great Composer and Sadhak Kamalakanta

Agamani and Vijaya Sangit (related to visit of Uma, wife of Shiva, to Her parent's home).

There is hearsay: Once, to listen his divine Shyama Sangit, Devi Vishalakshi Herself arrived in front of Kamalakanta in disguise of mother of Dharmanarayan, supplier of milk and curd to Vishalakshi temple.

Then, Kamalakanta sang this majestic song:

"Cherish beloved Mother Shyama with tender care in the heart,
May only You and my mind, nobody else behold.
Controlling all passions let You and I enjoy in solitude,
But keep only tongue active to cry,"Mother, Mother."
Consider ignorance as bad counselor; do not allow it to dictate;
Keep true knowledge as guard, but makes it watchful all the time.
O mind of Kamalakanta, this is my humble statement:
If poor gets wealth, does he neglect it?"

Listening to this divine song, delighted universal Mother Vishalakshi talked to Kamalakanta and also gave him milk. Kamalakanta thought that milkman Dharmanarayan could not come due to special engagement; so, on his behalf his mother carried milk. However, after a little while, Dharmanarayan brought milk. Kamalakanta was totally surprised. He told Dharmanarayan that there was no need for milk as his mother had just brought it; now, it was time for Dharmanarayan to be surprised; he informed Kamalakanta that his mother died long ago; how could she bring milk? Siddha sadhak Kamalakanta did realize that Mother Vishalakshi Herself came to listen his song; consequently, he was thrilled with great pleasure and immersed in the deep meditation with the gracious image of the Mother.

In another occasion, in far-advanced night, Kamalakanta needed shole fish as a special ingredient of sadhana. Mother Vishalakshi Herself brought fish in disguise of a fish-woman and thereafter disappeared. Similar to this, there were innumerable events occurring about siddha sadhak Kamalakanta.

In this time, cholera disease broke out in an epidemic form in Kashi. Some distinguished persons from Kashi came to Kamalakanta with an objective to take him to Kashi to perform Kali puja; with long persuasions, they could make him agree, and brought him to Kashi. Under complete concentration with super devotion and while drinking wine Kamalakanta started performing puja; this unorthodox way of puja in intoxicated condition made some local people angry, and they criticized his Kali puja. This undue criticism made Kamalakanta mad; and he stroke hand of Mother Kali with the falchion of sacrifice; immediately, blood started flowing from the hand with great intensity. Assembled devotees were totally astonished and terrified; they asked for forgiveness; compassionate Kamalakanta pardoned them and said, "Except one, none will die in cholera in Kashi." Super sadhak Kamalakanta was a vak siddha (had power of uttering infallible words). Thus, his words did come true, and except one nobody died in cholera from that epidemic in Kashi. Also, further incident of cholera was completely stopped.

After returning to Kotalhat from Kashi, Kamalakanta concentrated again in sadhana and composition of songs; for a long time he persuaded these two great activities. Meanwhile, his second wife died; dearest disciple prince Pratapchand also pre-maturely died. Due to the pre-mature death of his son, Maharaja and also disciple Tejachandra unnecessarily misunderstood guru Kamalakanta;

however, later he realised his mistake and asked forgiveness of guru; ever-compassionate and super sadhak Kamalakanta graciously pardoned the disciple Tejachandra.

Now, the critical time of death had arrived. Maharaja Tejachandra wanted to send guru Kamalakanta to riverside of holy Ganges, but in response to his wish Kamalakanta sang the following immortal song with a smile:

> *"God forbid! Why shall I go to the riverside of Ganges?*
> *As a son of Black-Mother*
> *Should I take refuge under step mother?"*

What a surprise! Just at the great moment of death, his countless devotees and disciples witnessed with great respect a super natural scene – piercing the bed made of straw in the house of guru Kamalakanta, sacred stream of holy river Ganges was flowing with great speed. Kamalakanta ended his last act of mortal life taking bath with stream of holy river Ganges. This immortal sadhak and super composer of Shyama Sangit died in 1821 AD.

Song of Kamalakanta is an integral part of his sadhana; his sadhana is not without song. In later years, incarnation of the age Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansadeva, guru of the age Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, and other Shakta sadhakas used to sing his divine songs and got absorbed in profound meditation. For more than one-hundred and ninety years, even today, innumerable Shyama Sangits of Kamalakanta have been cordially greeted by Bengali world of music. Also, his divine songs have been inspiring countless Shakta sadhakas and singers. Among his vast collection of Shyama Sangits, following is a list of a few memorable songs:

1. *Black bee of my mind is drawn to blue lotus flower of Shyama's feet.*

2. *Is my Mother Shyama black?*
3. *Sentimental distress of my mind;*
4. *O mind, be steady within yourself;*
   Do not run away to other place.
5. *Nothing is worthy in this world;*
6. *O mind, you do not know the real secret.*
7. *Can everybody realize Mother Shyama?*
8. *Ever blissful Kali;*
9. *O three-eyed, what is the nature of Your compassion?*
10. *What trap has been created by Shyama?*
11. *Mother Shyama, what form do You take at which time?*
12. *Cherish beloved Mother Shyama with tender care in the heart*
13. *Mother Shyama, I have no wealth;*

In the year 1914 AD, from Channa village of Burdwan, four of the above songs, number 3, 5, 9, and 12, were collected by the great sadhak, poet, and artist Sri Sri Bhuluababa. His eldest son Sri Kamalakanta Ghosh informed the author (Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay) about these four songs; the author gratefully acknowledges his contribution.

Shyama Sangits of Kamalakanta are not just divine, these are also rich in philosophical concepts; even today, these have been nourishing and keeping alive the tradition of Bengali Shakta sadhana and Shyama Sangits. After 36 years of his death, in 1857 AD, under the encouragement of Mahatabchandra, king of Burdwan, a collection of 269 Shyama Sangits of Kamalakanta was published. After 28 years, in 1885 AD, another collection, "*Kamalakanta Padavali*" was published.

2.25 History of Construction of Tara-Temple for the Third Time

In the year 1818 AD, for the third time, temples of Tarama and Chandrachuhra-Shiva were constructed. Before starting of this construction, even in the time of Raja Ramkrishna, from the year 1776 AD, the temples of Tarama and Chandrachuhra Shiva, established by Raja Ramajivan, were in bad shape. However, inspite of this deteriorated condition, daily puja of Tarama and Chandrachuhra Shiva was somehow continuing. While staying in Tarapith, sadhak Kamalakanta used to sing many Shyama Sangits in front of Tarama by sitting in this worn-out temple. Afterwards, condition of temples of Tarama and Chandrachuhra Shiva further deteriorated to become almost miserable.

In this time, in the year 1818 AD, by the grace of Tarama, a prayer of Sri Jagannath Roy was fulfilled. He was a resident of Mallarpur village situated next to Tarapith; he was a rich merchant and also a generous devotee. He promised to Tarama that on fulfillment of his prayer he would rebuild the temples. Thus, to keep up his promise, Sri Jagannath Roy constructed with huge expenditure new temples on the ruins of old temples of Tarama and Chandrachuhra Shiva which were originally established by Raja Ramjivan. In addition, he built leisure-room (biram-khana) of Tarama, food-offering room (bhog-ghar), store room, etc. Super devotee Jagannath Roy expanded also area of the sacred Jivitakunda.

It is known from the rock inscription on the Taratemple, at that time Sri Kedarnath Panda was one of the priests of Taratemple. It was during the time of Sri Kedarnath Panda, Jagannath Roy repaired also worn-out protective walls, etc. In subsequent periods, descendants of Jagannath Roy also performed reconstruction. On the outer surface of the Taratemple, names of the aforesaid service providers are inscribed.

Taratemple was inaugurated on 12th Phalgun (February - March), of 1818 AD. In later period (after 19 years), this 12th Phalgun has become adorable forever in the history of sadhana in Tarapith due to birth day of Shiva Avatara Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Also, since that day is celebrated as Shiva-Ratri (night dedicated to worship Shiva), this is also a memorable day for ever regarding puja and celebration of Tarapith.

Following are described on the rock inscription (in Bengali script) of the Taratemple:

শ্রীশ্রীদূর্গা

শকাব্দ ১৭৪০

শ্রীশ্রীঁ রী বাটী ও মন্দির
গয়রহ তৈয়ারী না এক
শ্রীযুক্ত জগন্নাথ রায়
সাং মল্লারপুর তরফ
ম্যানেজার শ্রীভাগবত রায়
সাং ঐ, সন ১২২৫ সাল
তাং ১২ই ফাল্গুন।
সেবকবৃন্দ—

শ্রীপঞ্চানন সরকার
সাং—পদিম কান্দি
শ্রীঘুরানন্দ সণ্ডা
” রামশঙ্কর রাজ বিরাদারী
” রামমোহন রাজ
” ভোলানাথ রাজ
” গোপাল রাজ এবং ভৈরব রাজ।

The English translation of the above rock inscription is as follows:

SriSriDurga
Shakabda 1740 (1818 AD)
SriSri main home and temple
Etc. built by
Sriyukta Jagannath Roy
Residence Mallarpur side
Manager SriBhagabat Roy
Residence same, Bengali calendar year 1225 (1818 AD)
Date 12th Phalgun
Service Providers –
SriPanchanan Sarkar
Address – Padim Kandi
SriGhurananda Sanda
" Ramshankar Raj Biradari
" Rammohan Raj
" Bholanath Raj
" Gopal Raj and Bhairav Raj

On the outer surface of Taratemple, there are fine terracotta works describing many famous stories from the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*; some notable examples are:

From the *Ramayana*:

1. Sri Ramachandra and Ravana are fighting, both are planting arrow on bow.
2. Abduction of Sita.
3. Untimely awakening of Goddess Durga by Ramachandra.
4. Ten-handed Devi Durga.

From the *Mahabharata*:

1. Act (lila) of Sri Krishna.
2. In the war of Kurukshetra, great warrior Bhishma lying on bed made of arrows.
3. Bhishma is drinking nectar coming out spontaneously from the center of the Earth.

Taratemple is north facing, Sripadapadma is situated on the north side of Tarapith maha-shmashana; Dvaraka River, adjacent to maha-shmashana, is north bound; Shilamayi Tarama inside the temple is also north facing. On both sides in the north side of the north-facing Taratemple, aforesaid stories are beautifully inscribed; on the eastern side of north direction stories like abduction of Sita from the *Ramayana* are inscribed; and on the western side of the north direction stories like Krishna-lila are inscribed.

Main gate of the north-facing temple is placed in the north direction; besides there is also a small door in the eastern side of the temple. Tarama, as worshipped by sage Vashishtha, is gracefully present on a high altar facing towards north inside the middle of the temple. The sadhakas, who worship Tarama and become siddha, do not go to hell (gates of death in the south direction, controlled by the Hindu God Yama). Thus, Tarama by facing towards north guards the south-directed gate of death. Also, Shiva, husband of Tarama, resides in mount Kailas in the north; due to this, Shiva Simantini (married woman whose husband is alive) Tarama is north facing.

There are four small temples on four sides of the Taratemple; these represent four aims of human life: dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth), kama (desire), and moksha (liberation). Trishul (trident) is leading towards great void (space) by piercing three round balls or lotuses located on the pinnacle of the temple. There are three subtle components of the Universe: sattva, rajas, and tamas; by piercing these three subtle components (gunas) i.e. by conquering these gunas, sadhak can reach to beyond-guna state which is symbolically represented by the trident and three lotuses or Sahasrara Chakra.

The Taratemple is situated on a high land in the south side of Jivitakunda. There is a protective wall around the temple. In the western side of the temple, towards the road, there is a wide wall erected in a well-curb style; in the northern side, there is a big paved compound. Around the Taratemple there is raised terrace; height of this terrace is about four-hand (rough measurement of short distance by hand) from the compound. In the eastern and south side of the temple there is store room and food-offering room respectively; there is a mid-size compound between store and food-offering rooms; this area is used to distribute prasad (food-offering) of Tarama to ascetics and devotees.

In the eastern side of the Taratemple, there is the mid-size, dome shaped, temple of pith Mahesvara (Shiva of Sati pith)

Chandrachuhra Shiva; there is only one west facing door for this temple; architecture is quite simple. There is an open terrace of a few hands wide around the temple. About two hands high from the pavement, on the plinth, Chandrachuhra Shiva temple is built. Inside the temple, beginning-less Linga Chandrachuhra Shiva is gracefully present; He is Bhairava (husband) of Tarama.

On the north-western side of the Taratemple, there is a small raised floor similar to platform on which rasa (the festival of dancing of Krishna) is held; this is known as leisure-home (biramkhana). On the fourteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight in the month of Ashvin (September – October), sacred idol used for daily worship of Tarama is brought to the leisure-home for puja during day and night.

On the western side of the Taratemple, there is a small flower-garden; leaves and flowers of this garden are dedicated for daily offerings of Tarama. Standing on the western side of the temple, extending to the western horizon and vast sky and bluish sign of far-off Atla etc. village are nicely seen.

Jivitakunda is situated on the north of the large compound which is located on north side of the Tara temple. There is a landing-stage (ghata) for reaching into Jivitakunda from the temple. Water for daily puja of Tarama is carried from here everyday by the servicemen; besides, local ascetics and devotees take daily bath in this holy pond.

Main gate of the temple is on the north side of the leisure-room. twelve-step downward from the main gate is the plain road; this is the main road of Tarapith village; it extends in north-south direction; maha-shmashana is in the western side of this road. The Taratemple is about two-storied high from the road. As a result of this, high pinnacle of the Taratemple can be seen from the far-away place.

While traveling from Mallarpur to Rampurhat by train or bus, pilgrims of Taratemple could be noticed. In this connection, it is mentionable that open-house of the Taratemple was built in the year 1935 AD, after one-hundred and seventeen years of construction (in the year 1818 AD by Jagannath Roy) of the Taratemple, Chandrachuhra-Shiva temple, food-offering room, leisure-room etc. More details on this will be discussed in the fifth volume of "*Mahapith Tarapith*".

2.26 Bishveshvar Bhattacharya

At the time of Second-Anandanath, Bishveshvar Bhattacharya was one of the greatest Tantriks and Shakta sadhakas of Tarapith. Also, from Second Anandanath he received initiation. He was very knowledgeable in Tantra scriptures; he was also thoroughly proficient in performing secret acts of Tantra. He was distinctly remembered among sadhakas of Tarapith as a very high level siddha Tantrik of Kaula path. In subsequent time, his disciple great sadhak Mokshadananda was elected as chief Kaula.

2.27 Khaki Baba

At the time of Bishveshvar Bhattacharya, many ascetics and great saints used to make frequent visits to Tarapith; more than one distinguished sadhakas were engaged at that period performing Tarasadhana in Tarapith; specially memorable among them are: Khaki Baba, Mokshadananda, Kailaspati of Dabuk, Jatababa, Ishan Bhattacharya, Hara and Hari Sadhu, etc.

In the history of sadhana in India, Khaki Baba is an unforgettable name. On one hand, he was a siddha yogi, a super-Tantrik, and also a great scholar. He was a very long-lived person, a very handsome, and a tall man. A Rajput by caste, he was born in the year 1795 AD in Rajputana.

In early life, Khaki Baba was a patriot; he was very resistant against the English. He was a distinguished leader of Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 AD. Many people used to address him as "Nana Saheb", because "Nana Saheb" disappeared forever. After Sepoy Mutiny, he came to spiritual path and left the worldly life. He traveled far and wide as ascetic and sadhak; at last, he arrived at Bhavanipur Satipith, located by the riverside Karatoya in the district of Baguhra in Bangladesh. He performed sadhana for a long time and received audience and grace of the ruling deity Devi Aparna.

In about the year 1853 AD, Khaki Baba arrived in Tarapith. For quite some time, he performed severe sadhana at the famous asana of great sage Vashishtha in the grand cremation ground of Tarapith. As a result, he was gratified by receiving audience and grace of Brahmamayi Tarama. Thereafter, by the wish of Tarama, he went to Bakreshvar; this is also a grand Satipith like Tarapith and Bhavanipur; here also, he received grace of Devi Durga and Bakreshvara. By performing sadhana and receiving audience and grace from ruling deities of Satipith, not just one but from three of them, super sadhak Khaki Baba has set an extraordinary precedent and outstanding example of sadhana tradition of India.

During stay of elderly holy man Khaki baba in Bakreshvar, sometimes special Chakra ceremonies (secret Tantrik rituals) were held. In order to participate in these very secret and rare Chakra ceremonies, there were distinguished visitors: Sri Sri Bamakhyapa from Tarapith, Datasaheb from Virnagar, and great sadhak Aghori Baba from grand cremation ground of Bakreshvar. Great Chakra ceremonies performed by these four super sadhakas were very significant.

Khaki Baba used to completely avoid morning duties of evacuation of bowels in Bakreshvar; in defense of this act his argument was, "Shiva resides in every inch of soil of Bakreshvar." In his opinion, nine million Shivas are present in Bakreshvar. Thus, everyday for morning duty and bath he used to go to opposite bank of Bakreshvar River.

Khaki Baba traveled through many holy places in India; sadhana for him was a natural matter. He got the company of Trailangasvami and almost all great holy men living in India at that time.

There are many hearsay narratives among sadhakas about Khaki Baba. Once, while traveling along the bank of very sacred Narmada River, Khaki Baba arrived at hermitage of the sage Markandeya; he decided to stay for a while in this hermitage for sadhana. At that time, there were some other very high level holy men residing in the hermitage; among them, there was also India famous holy man Trailangasvami. All of them had a very intimate relationship with Khaki Baba. One day, during last part of the night, Khaki Baba was performing act of sadhana in the bank of Narmada River; all on a sudden, looking at the stream of Narmada River, he was astonished; he noticed that stream of Narmada River was transformed and was flowing as white stream of milk; standing in this stream, super Yogi Trailangasvami was drinking that stream of milk with full-hand. Witnessing this supernatural event, Khaki Baba also extended his hands to drink divine stream of milk of Narmada River, but as soon as he touched Narmada River, stream of milk was converted back to stream of water and Trailangasvami also disappeared; even Khaki Baba was charmed by witnessing this supernatural yogik power of Trailangasvami.

Khaki Baba is also quite famous in India as holder of extraordinary yogik power. Many superhuman stories are known about him in Puri, one of the four holiest places in India. Once, a monstrous serpent was traveling with a roaring sound from the ocean towards the Jagannath temple. Consequently, people who witnessed this were fleeing with terror; at that moment, Khaki Baba stood in front of that gigantic and terrible serpent; immediately, serpent-king stopped; finally, under command from Khaki Baba, that huge snake left the place and submerged itself in the ocean of Puri.

In Bakreshvar also, many supernatural events of Khaki Baba are in circulation. One time in Bakreshvar, on account of acquaintance of a few rich people with Khaki Baba, some dacoits thought that Khaki Baba had gained lot of wealth. As a result, they decided to go to Khaki Baba's room in the night, and after killing him would rob all of his wealth. However, after entering into his room they found that Khaki Baba was already killed and his body was lying in disintegrated stage. They thought that before them some other group of dacoits came, and robbed everything after killing Khaki Baba; hence, dacoits went back with disappointment. Next day in the morning, dacoits were

Khaki Baba

completely surprised to find that Khaki Baba was in perfectly healthy condition, and was also performing his daily routine activities. Last night, they saw his dead body lying in disintegrated stage; now, in the morning, how could he alive and active? Dacoits rushed to Khaki Baba's feet and begged for his forgiveness. Subsequently, by the grace of Khaki Baba, they gave up robbery and lived like good citizens.

In many developments of Bakreshvar, Khaki Baba made significant contributions. After returning from Tarapith, he spent a long time in Bakreshvar. In subsequent period, he had many meetings with the living soul of Tarapith, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Also, both took part in Chakra ceremonies. From Khaki Baba, his disciple Mahananda Avadhut heard a special story about the attainment of siddhi by majestic saint Sri Sri Bamakhyapa; this has been described in the appropriate place in this book.

By the earnest desire and effort of Khaki Baba, a Kali temple was constructed in Bakreshvar on the north of Paphara River and cremation ground. At the age of 119 years, in Deoghar, he died on 7th Paush (December – January) of the year 1913 AD. Then, his sacred mortal body was brought in Bakreshvar for burial. Subsequently, a beautiful temple was built over his cemetery. This cemetery-temple of Khaki Baba is one of the worth seeing items in Bakreshvar.

2.28 Mokshadananda

Disciple's disciple of Second Anandanath, and disciple of Bishveshvar Bhattacharya, grand sadhak Mokshadananda is a glorious name in the history of siddha sadhakas of Tarapith. He is unforgettable as one of the teaching gurus of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Household name of Mokshadananda was Manikram Mukhopadhyay. Name "Mokshadananda" was given by his guru Bishveshvar Bhattacharya. He was born at Ratna village adjacent to Tarapith in Birbhum district. In his childhood, Mokshadananda was of very restless nature. In his young age, suddenly, he was attracted to the world of knowledge. Consequently, he learnt the Sanskrit language with great deal of effort and dedication.

At this time, he married and started household life. He married the daughter of Ishvarchandra Bandopadhyay, resident of Dakshingram near Ratna. However, after the marriage, he was becoming increasingly discontented towards worldly life; most of the time in house, he was keeping busy with study of Vedanta. Then, one day, he left home and went to Kashi to become scholar in Vedanta. In Kashi, he introduced himself as an unmarried person and took to Vaidik asceticism. He earned a great reputation as a scholar in Vedas. Also, he was distinctly identified as a preacher. In this way, time was passing by for a long time.

Meanwhile, wife of Mokshadananda, while searching for her husband for a long time, arrived in Kashi. One day, while Mokshadananda was preaching in a religious assembly, his wife arrived there and recognized him. She persuaded her husband to return to household life. As a result of this, the fact that Mokshadananda was married, was disclosed to the society of asceitics. Consequently, he was criticized and insulted by the Vaidik asceitics. Under compulsion, he had to go back to Tarapith with his wife.

In Tarapith, Mokshadananda along with his wife took initiation in Kaula path from Bishveshvar Bhattacharya. Also, he completed Tantrik sadhana following the instruction of great Kaula Bishveshvar Bhattacharya. Both Mokshadananda and his wife were engaged in severe sadhana under the guidance of their guru. At the proper time, they received endless grace of Tarama. Subsequently, blessed Mokshadananda was recognized as a scholar of the Vedas and Tantras.

Shakti sadhak and Vedik scholar Mokshadananda justified the name of "Mokshadananda", the ascetic name given by his guru. In around the year 1857 AD, according to the wish of guru Bishveshvar Bhattacharya, he received the position of chief Kaula of Tarapith. It is known that Mokshadananda introduced various puja occasions and festivals in Tarapith. A few examples are - Jagaddhatri puja, Dole-Yatra (Holi), Ratha-Yatra, Janmashtami, Ratanti puja. Also, he was very active in overall improvement of servicing of deities at Tarapith and Nalhati. Learned people used to respect him as scholar in Vedas, because he was unbeatable in the interpretation of Vedanta.

Mokshadananda had many rich disciples at various places of Birbhum district. During performance of sadhana by the young Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, he used to recite the Vedas. At the request of Vrajavasi, he cooperated with Sri Sri Bamakhyapa in many ways; at the proper time, more will be discussed on this issue. Super saint Sri Sri Bamakhyapa had tremendous respect for his teaching-guru, the chief Kaula Mokshadananda.

Mokshadananda died at a matured age. Sri Sri Bamakhyapa himself buried this highly learned and most reverend guru under shimul tree of maha-shmashana. Even after the death of Mokshadananda, his wife, devoted to husband and also a female sadhak, was alive for a long time. After her death, both husband and wife went to heaven by drinking nectar of Mother Tara.

2.29 Ishan Bhattacharya

At the time of Chief Kaula Mokshadananda, there were many Tantriks in Tarapith. Among them following are quite memorable: Ishan Bhattacharya, Kailaspati of Dabuk, Jatababa, Hara and Hari Sadhu, Alokananda, and Vrajavasi Kailaspati. In one hand, Ishan Bhattacharya was Tantrik, wise, and also Shakti sadhak. He had a melodious voice. He used to sing many songs in front of Universal Mother Tarama. There is hearsay that he was also a good composer of songs.

As appointed by king of Natore, Ishan Bhattacharya was the chief priest of Taratemple. In fact, from puja to food-offerings to Tarama, all was his responsibility. Leisure period was spent in sadhana. Secret activities of Tantrik sadhana were under his command, but to earn cheap fame by displaying supernatural yogik feats was not his desire. At all times he was in blissful condition keeping within Ishta-Devi Tarama. From time to time, under a heartfelt condition with joyful and tearful eyes he used to sing in front of Tarama.

Ishan Bhattacharya was a favored person of great Kaula Bishveshvar Bhattacharya and Mokshadananda. He was a close friend of Sri Sarvananda, father of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. On that account, Ishan Bhattacharya had great affection for the young Bamacharan (in later period Sri Sri Bamakhyapa), and caringly used to call him "son of Sabadada". In return, off and on, Bamacharan also served Ishan Bhattacharya during his sadhana performance. Ishan Bhattacharya was a big drinker of wine. After large consumption of wine, he used to sing with heart and soul different Shyama Sangits and deha-tattva (related to the doctrine that the body is the seat of all truth) songs. Then, young Bamacharan used to carry him to the proper place.

Shakti sadhak Ishan Bhattacharya was a graced child of Tarama. There is a great connection between the early life of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa and the end period of Ishan Bhattacharya; this will be discussed in detail at the proper time.

2.30 Kailaspati of Dabuk

One of the greatest siddha sadhakas of Tarapith is Kailasanandaswami. Later, he was famous as Kailaspati. He was born in the year 1737 AD on 26th Ashvin (September - October). In other account, year of birth should be 1768 AD. Ulo village of Nadia district was his birth place. He was the uncle of reputed Baman Das Mukhopadhyay of Ulo village. Household name of Kailaspati of Dabuk was Bhuvan Mohon Mukhopadhyay.

Right from the childhood, he was deeply attracted to the spiritual world. He married at a young age. But after the marriage, only at the age of 30 years (in the year 1767 AD), he renounced the world with strong spiritual consciousness and arrived at Kashi. At that time in Kashi, maha-sadhak Brahmananda was quite famous and influential. Mahapurusha (saint) Brahmananda graciously initiated young Bhuvan Mohon.

After initiation, he traveled various places in India. In the year 1854 AD, under the direction of deity for Shakti sadhana, he came to Birbhum, India (famous ancient Sati pith and grand place of Tantrik tradition). For five years, he traveled in disguise to different areas of Birbhum. In the year 1859 AD, at Dakshingram near Tarapith, he was introduced to Ishvarchandra Bandopadhyay, father-in-law of Mokshadananda. Subsequently, close relationship was developed and Ishvarchandra became his disciple. At this time, he took Shubhankari, daughter of Ramananda Mandal, as female partner (shakti) and performed sadhana in Tarapith. Then, he was about 124 years old. He achieved super siddhi in yoga and Tantra. Kailaspati was handsome and tall. As a result of siddhi in yoga and Tantra, he possessed super natural power. All troubles – like disease, old age, and death were under his control.

He performed sadhana at Tarapith for quite some time, and received audience and grace of Tarama. During the period of sadhana, he became friendly with the contemporary sadhakas of Tarapith like Bishveshvar Bhattacharya, Mokshadananda, and Ishan Bhattacharya; in subsequent time, he became close also with maha Tantrik Sri Sri Bamakhyapa.

In the year 1865 AD, he discovered Beginningless-Linga Unmettesvara Shiva in Dabuk. This place is situated little more than six miles south of Tarapith. For purification of Shiva-Linga, he invited Sri Sri Bamakhyapa from Tarapith to Dabuk. Accordingly, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa went to Dabuk and purified Unmettesvara Shiva. On account of discovery of the Unmettesvara Shiva by Kailaspati, he is famous as "Kailaspati of Dabuk".

Kailaspati became very active in organizing daily puja and construction of temple of Unmettesvara Shiva in Dabuk. Hence, to raise fund for these expenditures, he went to Maharaja of Kashmir and requested 100,000 Indian rupees. In response, Maharaja of Kashmir said, "I have seen many great sadhus; are you so great that just for asking money I should give you 100,000 rupees!" It should be remembered that 100,000 rupees at that time will be valued today at more than 30 million rupees (more than 600,000 US$). However, Kailaspati of Dabuk answered with gentle and solemn sound, "I do not like to show any miracle; nevertheless, to win over your confidence, I will show you something. On top of the palace, I will place food offerings for a female fox; keep all the doors of palace open, and female fox would come and accept food offerings from the palace." Next, as said by Kailaspati, female fox came and accepted food-offerings. He showed this super natural event to Maharaja. Consequently, with great pleasure, Maharaja donated 100,000 rupees.

With the donation received from Maharaja of Kashmir, Kailaspati started construction of Shiva temple in Dabuk. In the year 1880 AD, this construction was complete. This big temple of Shiva is the tallest in Birbhum, and also is quite famous as one of the very tall temples in Bengal. Numerous houses with many rooms were built around this Dabuk's Shiva temple.

After the opening of Shiva temple, Maharaja of Kashmir came to Dabuk to visit the temple. On the way, he came to Mahapith Tarapith to visit Tarama and Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. In later period, he was initiated by Kailaspati of Dabuk and became his disciple. For daily puja of Unmettesvara Shiva, he arranged regular donation of 50 Indian rupees per month.

Kailaspati had many disciples. He was a princely sadhak. Subsequently, he took a Bhairavi (female partner for Shakti sadhana). Noticing his princely behavior and sadhana, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa used to address him "Raja Gosai". Among the numerous male and female disciples of Kailaspati of Dabuk, following are specifically memorable: Ishvarchandra, Madan Gosai, Kuladananda and his wife Tripuranandamayi, Maharaja of Kashmir, Purnananda Swami and his wife Bhairavima.

There is the following hearsay about the death of white shimul tree in maha-shmashana of Tarapith:

Once Kailaspati was meditating under shimul tree in maha-shmashana of Tarapith. Meanwhile, there was a disturbance and an unknown creature licked his back and left the place. Consequently, he had fever with high temperature and cursed shimul tree for this trouble. Subsequently, as a result of this curse, this ancient super white shimul tree was dying. However, on another account, much before this incident, shimul tree was dead (please refer earlier discussion "maha-shveta-shimul tree").

On 17th Bhadra (August - September) of the year 1917 AD, Kailaspati of Dabuk, at the age of 180 years, after performing a magnificent service, left this mortal world to unite with his chosen deity (Ishta); on some other account, date of death is 16th Magh (January – February).

Following is the hearsay about the mysterious death of Kailaspati:

One morning, aged Kailaspati went to a pond for routine morning duties. On the bank, there was a big tiger sitting on the stock of an Indian fig-tree. Consequently, he was terrified and went to village and returned with public to kill the tiger. When he was directing village people for killing the tiger, the tiger jumped on him and covered him all over with wounds. As a result of these serious wounds, he rolled on the ground. Scared village people fled the place. Only when the tiger left the scene, they had come back and took the wounded Kailaspati of Dabuk to the temple for nursing. However, after a few days, Kailaspati died.

Both of the abovementioned stories about Kailaspati (food offering to female fox in the palace of Maharaja of Kashmir, and killing by the tiger) and even date and year of birth and death of Kailaspati were told by Sri Sri Bamakhyapa to his devotee Hari Mandal. In fact, birth and death information as told by Sri Sri Bamakhyapa have been used in our above statement. For the aforesaid two stories and birth and death data about Kailaspati, the writer (Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay) is ever grateful to Sri Ambujaksha Roy, Gangadas Bhattacharya; and Devkumar Roy, grand son of Annapurna Devi, one of the nieces of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa.

2.31 Jatababa

Maha-sadhak Jatababa is quite famous as one of the great Shakti sadhakas of Tarapith. He was contemporary of Kailaspati of Dabuk. His formal name was "Narayan Chandra Brahmachari", but because of his long matted hair he was popularly known as "Jatababa". He was a resident of East Bengal (now Bangladesh); mainly, from Chattagram, according to hearsay.

He performed different types of sadhana in numerous occasions in Tarapith. For the first time, in old age, he came to Tarapith. He engaged in severe sadhana in maha-shmashana of Tarapith. At last, he received the rare audience and grace of Tarama.

His Yoga siddhi was extraordinary. Once, for a few days, he came to Kanakpur village, three miles west of Murarai station of Birbhum district. At that time he was more than 100 years old. On the way to Haridwar, he visited house of a devoted disciple. During this visit, villagers of Kanakpur and Paikar witnessed his innumerable supernatural yogik powers. At that time, he healed incurable diseases of many residents of those villages. He used to travel in heavy rain, but surprisingly, not a single drop of rain-water would fall on his body. On one instance, in Paikar village, he managed to fully feed many people with luchis (small bread fried in clarified butter) made of only one ser (933 grams) flour.

He had been accepting prasad after offering to Ishta Devi in dead night. Then, nobody was allowed to come near; violation would make him very angry. This long lived mahapurusha loved and respected Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Jatababa sent many devotees to Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, that includes Yogendranath Chattopadhyay, one of the great autobiographers of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa.

2.32 Hara and Hari Sadhu

Two sadhakas, Hara and Hari, came together to Tarapith for performing sadhana. At that time, Tarapith was crowded with many sadhakas; even then, by individual effort, both started severe sadhana in maha-shmashana of Tarapith. Witnessing their very austere vow and sadhana, contemporary sadhakas were charmed. They became famous in the circle of sadhus in Tarapith. At last, they were blessed with the endless grace of Tarama.

Unorthodox sadhana of Hara and Hari sadhu, and their friendship and intimacy, were not only famous among society of sadhus in Tarapith but also created a deep curiosity among general public. As God Hara (Shiva) and Hari (Narayana) are inseparable, unity in names (Hara and Hari sadhu) and also similarity of their works were noticed by all; they live together at all time – eating, walking, sleeping, meditating. Consequently, these Hara and Hari sadhu became "Hari Hara"- just one soul to people in Tarapith.

Worldly prosperity and spiritual realization, both were under control of Hara and Hari sadhu. There are many supernatural events around both of them. For a long time, they had tremendous influence on the life of people in Tarapith. They helped many devotees and distressed men and women to achieve their desired goal. Under the influence of their supernatural powers, many sick people were cured. Among the many admirers of Hara and Hari sadhu, notables were: Mokshadananda, Ishan Bhattacharya, Kailaspati of Dabuk, and Jatababa.

2.33 Alokananda

At the time of Jatababa, an old sadhu of 75 years old arrived in Tarapith. Whoever met this glowing Alokananda sadhu (ascetic) all had been mesmerized.

Holder of the big matted hair and possessor of only a kaupin (a small piece of cloth used by Indian ascetics), this radiant maha-sadhak prepared a seat under the shimul tree in maha-shmashana of Tarapith and submerged in deep sadhana. Within a short time, this great ascetic received audience and grace of Universal Mother Tarama. There was great unification of both yoga and Tantra within mahapurusha Alokananda. Also, both prosperity and realization were under his control. He was very much respected by sadhus of Tarapith.

Fame of his supernatural yogik power spread far and wide. Many fortunate devotees were gratified by him. He visited Tarapith more than once. One visit was made during the time of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Then, Dr. Amalendu Goswami, disciple of Aghoribaba of Bakreshvar, was fortunate to receive his divine audience and association. This was the last time Alokananda was seen in Tarapith.

100 years old Dr. Amalendu Goswami, who was known as Aghoribaba, informed Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay about Alokananda. Consequently, he is ever grateful to him.

2.34 Vrajavasi Kailaspati

When great sadhak Mokshadananda was the Chief Kaula of Tarapith, Vrajavasi Kailaspati came to Tarapith from Vrajadham (Vrindavan) in the year 1857 AD. He had a garland of tulsi (basil plant) on the neck, rosary composed of rudraksha (a special dried fruit used as a bead) in hands, and was associated with a Bhairavi. Unity between Shyam and Shyama could be noticed in his dress and behavior. Likewise, Mahapith Tarapith is also recognized as grand synthesizer of Shyam and Shyama.

Although he came from Vrindavan (holy place of Vaishnavas), he performed sadhana in the land of Shaktas, Tarapith. Consequently, he became realized. Many called him "Mani Gosai". Innumerable events of his yogik powers have been circulating in the life of people. Some of his supernatural events were: walking over water by pranayama (control of breath), staying under water for hours after hours, floating in the air, etc. For a long time, similar incidents were witnessed by people of Tarapith and adjacent villagers. Even, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa himself, witnessed extraordinary lila of his formal guru. Also, he described these to his devotees. Once, to a dead tulsi plant Vrajavasi Kailaspati said three times, "Tulsi alive" by sprinkling holy water from kamandalu (special pot used by ascetics); surprisingly, the dead tulsi plant became alive.

Mahapurusha Vrajavasi Kailaspati got the right of sacred asana of Vashishthadeva located under shimul tree. In subsequent years, he became formal guru of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. At that time, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was a young man of 26 years old. Vrajavasi Kailaspati noticed the sacred signs of very high level saint on the divine body of young Bamakhyapa. Consequently, he predicted that one day, Bamakhyapa would be recognized as a famous mahapurusha; everybody was astonished by this strong prediction. Many did not believe it.

Vrajavasi Kailaspati was introduced to Bamakhyapa for the first time in the house of Durgadas Sarkar in Atla village. At that time, Bamakhyapa was just an emotional young man, dedicated to Tarama. Subsequently, they became quite close. He is the man who brought young Bamakhyapa to ascetic life. Also, in all respects, he helped Bamakhyapa to perform sadhana in maha-shmashana of Tarapith. Furthermore, by Vedik scholar Mokshadananda, he arranged recitation of the Vedas to Bamakhyapa. Vrajavasi Kailaspati was a good friend of Mokshadananda. Therefore, he influenced Mokshadananda to become the teaching-guru of Bamakhyapa.

After the attainment of siddhi of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, all of a sudden, Vrajavasi Kailaspati supernaturally disappeared with his Bhairavi. After crossing Dvaraka River of Tarapith, Vrajavasi Kailaspati travelled a little and suddenly vanished in the sky. Under the firm direction of Tarama, Vrajavasi Kailaspati came to Tarapith from far away Vrindavan. On completion of guiding Bamakhyapa in his sadhana, Vrajavasi went back to his own Vrajadham. Along with the great sadhakas of Tarapith, and also as the formal guru of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, name of Vrajavasi Kailaspati will remain memorable forever in the golden history of Mahapith Tarapith.

End of Part 2 of Mahapith Tarapith.

MAHAPITH TARAPITH

PART 3

PURUSHOTTAMA SRI SRI BAMAKHYAPA – EARLY ACTIVITIES

3.0 Introduction to Part 3

This part three is completely dedicated to the early life of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, greatest saint of Tarapith in Kali Yuga. Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was the incarnation of Shiva or Shiva Avatara. Therefore, as an introduction to the part three, following immortal quotations from the Hindu scriptures about incarnation (Avatara) are quite relevant:

> "*Yada yada hi dharmasya glanirbhavati bharata;*
> *Abhyutthvanam-adharmasya tadatmanam srijamyaham.*"
> – [*Bhagavad Geeta*: *4.7*]
>
> – "Whenever there is a decline of righteousness, and a rise of unrighteousness, I (God) incarnate myself."
>
> But what is the purpose?
>
> *"Paritranaya sadhunam vinashaya cha dushkritam;*
> *Dharma samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge."*
> – [*Bhagavad Geeta: 4.8*]
>
> – "To protect the good, to destroy the wicked, and to re-establish religious principles, I (God) appear in every age."

These wonderful verses have been quoted countlessly by the spiritual masters. Whenever there is a need because of moral and spiritual downfall to a very low level, to restore goodness and purity there are divine manifestations again and again.

This superhuman task of restoration is so demanding that only Avataras (Divine Incarnations) can accomplish this.

"Tava kathamritam tapta-jivanam kavibhiriditam kalmashapaham;
Shravana mangalam srimadatatam bhuvigrinanti ye bhurida janah."
– [*Gopi-Geeta*]

– "The nectar of Your words are the life and soul of those suffering in this material world. These narrations, transmitted by learned sages, remove one's sinful reactions and bestow good fortune upon whoever hears them. These narrations filled with spiritual power are broadcasted all over the world. Certainly, those who spread the message of Godhead are most bountiful."

"Svayam eva atmana atmanam vettha tvam purushottam;
Bhuta bhavana bhutesha devadeva jagatpate."
– [*Bhagavad Geeta: 10.15*]

– "O Supreme Purusha (Purushottama), O Source of all beings in the world (Bhuta Bhavana), O master of all beings in the world (Bhutesha), O God of gods (Devadeva), O Ruler of the universe (Jagatpate) – nobody can understand You, but only You know Your true form."

3.1 Grand Stage for Divine Incarnation

In this universe, Ishvara (God) appears as Avatara (Incarnation) in age after age (yuga after yuga). Because of the need of the ages He appears. Also, it happens at the transition of ages. In Indian Scriptures, there is description of Ten Avataras of Vishnu, namely, the Fish, the Tortoise, the Hog, the Man-Lion (half man and half lion), the Dwarf, Parashurama (the Axe-man), Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Kalki (The Slayer). The Ten Avataras or Dasha Avataras of Vishnu are important and very interesting as He incarnates progressively from fish to human form. Also, in *Bhagavata*, 22 Avataras have been discussed; in addition, whenever there is a need, there are appearances in every yuga, again and again.

This yuga is not the same as four yugas – Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali. In fact, this yuga is the intermediate period (kala) of few centuries between two of the so-called four yugas. If we identify four yugas as "maha-yuga"; then, period (kala) between maha-yuga can be termed as "yuga". After 36 years of the great war of the *Mahabharata* in Dvapara Yuga, Kali Yuga commenced; and, since then, Kali Yuga has been in vogue for about four and half thousand years.

In this Kali Yuga, for about 45 centuries, in response to the need of yuga, Ishvara appeared as Avatara in many occasions to re-establish righteousness. For example, Buddha, Mahavir, Yishu (Jesus Christ), Shankar, Ramanuj, Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramkrishna, and others appeared in this world many times in the form of Supreme Saguna Brahman (as Avatara). Purposes of their divine appearances were to remove the downfall of existing religions and also to introduce new religions in different parts of the world. For the benefit of yuga and universe, again and again, under His strict command through grand cycles of creation and destruction, these appearances occurred in the past and will definitely occur in future. Again, in the same yuga or kala, and in many different places Ishvara concurrently appeared to clean filthiness of religion. For example, for the benefit of universe, in nineteenth century, at the same time, Brahma-Power manifested in different areas. many people consider these various Avataras as "partial incarnation". But indivisible Brahman can not be divided. Thus, since Whole is indivisible, His part is also indivisible. In fact, this Whole is omnipresent, and the one and only one Brahma-Power pervades the entire universe. Therefore, Brahman, living being, and the world – all are in reality same. Consequently, One is three, and also three are One.

In nineteenth century, there were divine Avataras glittering like great stars in the heavenly sky of holy India. There are many reasons of these incarnations:

- To meet demand of the age.
- To remove impurity of religion.
- To infuse new power and vitality in Hinduism.

Since time immemorial to eighteenth century, never there were appearances of so many Avataras at the same time in any yuga. However, for the first time in the history, in nineteenth century, incredible appearances of Avataras in concurrence happened; in that respect, nineteenth century is ever-memorable, ever-adorable, and ever-respectable.

Whatever is necessary for a yuga to make appearance of Avatara, all were present in the nineteenth century. India was submerged under the serious downfall of religion. Also, subordinate India was then totally distressed under the tyranny and extortion of oppressing British Empire. Consequently, overall unity of India was incomplete and helpless. Thus, in the social and religious lives also, there were confusions and ugly tendencies to blindly follow the foreigners. Also, by the allurement and dirty conspiracy of the Christian clergymen, large number of Indian people were leaving their own religion to become Christians. Christian priests with the help of British ruling power, declaring a holy war against idolatry of Hinduism, were attracting illiterate and foolish persons. Even, many educated men and women were adopting Christianity by giving up Hinduism. Also, by offering a reward of high level job and promise to upgrade the social status, Christian clergymen were converting many people to Christians.

People were forgetting the tradition of own religion and lofty philosophical thoughts and ideals embedded in different concepts – God with and without form, non-dualism and dualism, qualified non-dualism, etc. There were maximum confusion, disorder, and restlessness in all aspects of life including spiritual, social, political, and economical fields. Terrible flow of corrupt religion was prevalent everywhere. Even, orthodox sadhus and asceitics were distracted; some became very fanatic, few other were violating the divine instructions of God by performing black art. After obtaining yogik power by the grace of God, if that sadhu does not want to follow the prescribed spiritual path, he becomes a competitor of God, and even makes attempt to change the divine cycle of creation and destruction. Certainly, that is the time when downfall of religion is complete. Then, God appears as Avatara with His full strength to destroy those powerful, distracted, and wicked sadhus; on the other hand, He protects honest and surrendered sadhus and devotees; indeed, this is the true meaning of *"paritranaya sadhunam vinashaya cha dushkritam;*

In nineteenth century, there was a serious downfall of religion across India, not only in life of common people due to influence and tyranny of Christianity, but also in the society of sadhus as a result of influx of corrupt Tantrik Kapaliks (a Tantrik sect worshipping the cult of Kali using the human skull for drinking and sitting on human skulls) and strong opposition to Hindu system of gods. Consequently, to meet the need of the age, to remove the impurity of religion, and to supply new life and power to the Hindu religion, God appeared simultaneously as many Avataras in different parts of India. Thus, nineteenth century is a great stage for divine reincarnation. Omniscient God appeared in different forms in different fields at the same time. Therefore, every form was His living representative. To accomplish the destined divine task, each Avatara appeared for a definite area of improvement. Thus, we notice the appearance of the following great Avataras across the whole India around same time at the auspicious nineteenth century: Avatara of the yuga Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsadeva in Dakshineshvar, Guru of the yuga Sri Sri Bamakhyapa in Tarapith, light of the yuga Trailangaswami in Kashi, Shyamacharan Lahiri, Bhaskarananda, Harihar Baba, guide of the yuga Lokenath Brahmachari in Vardi, Madhavananda Giri Maharaj in Kamakhya, Gambhirananda in Gorakshapur, Vijoykrishna Goswami in Dhaka, Prabhu Jagabandhu in Pharidpur, Sri Sri Ramthakur in Chowmohani, Bholagiri Maharaj in Haridwar, Balananda Brahmachari in Deoghar, Sri Sri Ramadas Kathiababa in Vrindavan, etc.

These Avataras guided the distressed and confused people, re-established them in proper place, and gradually infused the divine message and power of God into their lives. Somewhere grace of God was demonstrated in supernatural way; again in some other places, divinity of God was expressed through very high and noble forms. Also, some showed the unity of motherland and Universal Mother to prove that patriotism and love of God are actually indistinguishable; likewise, gradually, tyrant heretic power, confused and self-oblivious men and women; and a handful waster of divine power of God, ignorant but forceful sadhus submitted to the superhuman spiritual strength of the aforesaid great Avataras. In all respects, these super human personalities saved the country and nation from the disgrace of religion; inspired countrymen with patriotism. As a result, religious teacher of the world, eternal India regained her political freedom.

Mahapith Tarapith is one of the grand areas of this gigantic and great activity of Avataras. In auspicious moment of nineteenth century, Purushottama Sri Sri Bamakhyapa appeared as one of the super powerful Avataras.

3.2 Place of Birth

Holy Birbhum is distinctly identified as one of the acting (lila) places of super Brahman. Different religious sects of India like Shakta, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Ganapatya, Saura, Brahman, Aoul, Baul, etc. have been unified in this great Birbhum. For several yugas, Birbhum has been maintaining this sacred tradition under regular succession of religious movements.

In Satyayuga, eight sacred pieces of Sati's body fell in this Birbhum. These eight Sati pithas are super holy places not only for Shakta, but also for all other religious sects. Thus, in this Birbhum, owner of glorious tradition, different concepts of sadhana have been beautifully integrated. In this holy land, the indifference between Shyam and Shyama is quite prominent more than any other places in India. As a result, many saints, spiritual leaders, noble men, philosophers, poets, mystic sadhakas, patriots, artists, writers, educationists, and innumerable wise and learned people appeared in this sacred land of Birbhum.

The spiritual tradition of Birbhum is also quite old. In ancient time, name of Birbhum was "Kamkoti". In the Kulapanji or "*Sambandha Nirnaya*" book by Maheshvar, this old Kamkoti was described as a very sacred land. In this Kamkoti, Daksha, one of the five Brahmins (Daksha, Vedagarva, etc.) coming to Bengal from Kanyakubja, settled for sadhana. In later period, name of Kamkoti was changed to "Birbhumi". Also, Birbhum was settlement of "Bir" kings and growing place of "Bir Tree", and "Birbhumi" or Birbhum was famous as "Rarhbhumi". In fifth century BC. Lord Buddha preached his religion here. According to old Jaina scripture "*Acharanga Sutra*" (fifth century BC), 24th Tirthankar Mahavir preached Jaina religion in this Rarhbhumi. Also, afterwards, many preachers publicized their religions in this holy land. In sixteenth century, Birbhum was distinctly recognized as one of the sacred activity (lila) places of Vaishnava gurus Sri Krishna Chaitanya and Nityananda Mahaprabhu.

For ages, Birbhum has been recognized as great holy place of lila of God. Birbhum is famous as great place of sadhana and siddhi in ancient time by super sages like Vashishthadeva, Vibhandak, Dattatreya, Bhrigu, Parashurama etc.; likewise, in the middle period, Birbhum is quite recognized as birth place of great mystic noble men like Jaydev, Kalidas, Chandidas, Nityananda Mahaprabhu etc. Again, in the modern period, this great holy land Birbhum is the place of sadhana by countless sadhakas like Kamalakanta, Raja Ramkrishna, Khaki Baba, Aghori Baba, Kailasananda, Mangiri Gosai, Vrajavasi Kailaspati, Datasaheb etc. Besides, in the middle of nineteenth century, Brahma leader Maharshi Devendranath Thakur established a cottage for brahmacharis at Bolepur in Birbhum. In later period, his great son Ravindranath Thakur transformed it to an international institution, which is now known as word famous Shantiniketan. Bishvabharati University, founded by Ravindranath Thakur, is also situated in Shantiniketan. As one of the notable places in Birbhum, Shantiniketan is quite famous in India and abroad.

As discussed, Birbhum is a super holy land of majestic spiritual tradition. Thus, for the welfare of this world and living beings, immortal saint and Shiva-incarnation Sri Sri Bamakhyapa appeared in this sacred Birbhum. Consequently, in the middle of nineteenth century, Birbhum – a glorious land of Shakti, reveled again in the Indian spiritual world as a grand landing stage of supreme Brahma-Power.

3.3 Time and Date of Birth

Purushottama Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was born at 3:15 a.m. in the night of Trayodashi (13th lunar day) attached Shiva-Chaturdashi (special fourteenth day of lunar fortnight when yearly Shiva puja is traditionally celebrated) on Thursday, 12th Phalgun (24th February) of Bengali calendar year 1244 (1838 AD). Place of birth was Atla village, two miles west of Tarapith. However, it was not an easy task to find out this time and date of birth.

Many writers prior to Shastri Haricharan Gangopadhyay, fortunate companion of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa and writer of the "*Bamlila*", and founder of Bamamishon; and few writers after Haricharan Gangopadhyay, expressed different opinions about the year of birth of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. However, practical basis and assessment of their opinion can not be accurately found out.

Writer of the book "*Tara*", Teacher Mahimacharan, declared year of birth of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa as Bengali calendar year 1241. But he did not explain the basis of this conclusion. The same conclusion was also drawn by the writer Yogindranath Chattopadhyay but again without any support of authentic information. Sri Nagendranath Panda wrote a small book about the life of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. In his book, he mentioned the year of birth of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa as Bengali calendar year 1262; in support of his opinion, he argued that Radhamadhav, second brother of Beni Bhattacharya of Barhashal village, and Bamakhyapa were born on the same day. Upon enquiry, Shastri Haricharan Gangopadhyay learnt that Radhamadhav was born in Bengali calendar year 1262. Therefore, according to Sri Nagendranath Panda, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was born in the Bengali calendar year 1262. Again, Sri Shambhukinkar Chattopadhyay, grandson of Nagendranath Panda and writer of the

"*Tarashahran Bamacharan*" predicted Bengali calendar year 1250 as year of birth of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Aforesaid biographers of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa were almost contemporary to Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Also, many of them were intimately connected with the divine lila of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa; even then, there are difference of opinions.

Bengali calendar year 1250 or 1262 is impossible to be year of birth of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa due to following two reasons:

1) Younger brother of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, Ramchandra Chattopadhyay, was born in Bengali calendar year 1257; and, Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was 13 years older than his brother. 2) Taranath Brahmachari (Sri Sri Tarakhyapa), disciple of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, was nine years younger than his guru; and, Sri Sri Tarakhyapa was born on Friday, eighth Kartik (October - November) in Bengali calendar year 1253, in Srinagar of Garhowal district. Accordingly, year of birth of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa should be Bengali calendar year 1244 (1838 AD).

By the grace of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa and influence of Sri Sri Tarakhyapa, Śhastri Haricharan Gangopadhyay, writer of the "*Bamlila*", predicted the correct time and date of birth of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. He consulted English Ephemeris of 100 years, accurate calculation of the famous astrologer Sri Shashibhushan Acharya, and correct time of birth prediction by Saradacharan Shastri. Accordingly, he came to the firm conclusion that Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was born on the night of Trayodashi attached Shiva-Chaturdashi on Thursday, 12th Phalgun of Bengali calendar year 1244. Later on, almost all have supported this prediction. For example, in the book "*Tarapith Bhairav*", this conclusion has been totally accepted.

Bhairavdas Jnanananda Avadhut, great sadhak, truth seer, and also writer of "*Bamdevdarshan*", one of the great biographies of

Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, told this writer (Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay) in 1973 AD that Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was born at 3:15 a.m. in the night of Shiva-Chaturdashi on Thursday, 12th Phalgun of Bengali calendar year 1244.

It is therefore conclusively determined that Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was manifested at a very auspicious moment: At 3:15 a.m. in the night of Trayodashi attached Shiva-Chaturdashi on Thursday, 12th Phalgun (24th February) of Bengali calendar year 1244 (1838 AD). Accordingly, even today at different places of the country, his birth day has been celebrated with great pomp and splendour on the sacred Shiva-Chaturdashi.

3.4 Manifestation

Living idol of Saguna-Brahman (God with attributes), ever blissful Shiva-Avatara Purushottama Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was manifested in the divine Birbhum, holy land of grand synthesis of sadhana of many sadhakas. This majestic saint was born in the peaceful natural surrounding of Atla village, two miles west of Mahapith Tarapith. Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, to whom Tarama was everything, appeared in Sarvananda Chattopadhyay's small house which was constantly reverberated with the divine name of Tarama. Father Sarvananda Chattopadhyay was also most sincere devotee of Tarama. He was a born poet, artist, and always absorbed in sacred feeling of Mother Tara. Similarly, mother Rajkumari devi also was a sincere devotee like a constant offering of divine flower to the Lotus Feet of Tarama. The most expected auspicious manifestation of yuga-Guru Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was occurred through these highly spiritual and sacred sources for rescue and benefit of the world.

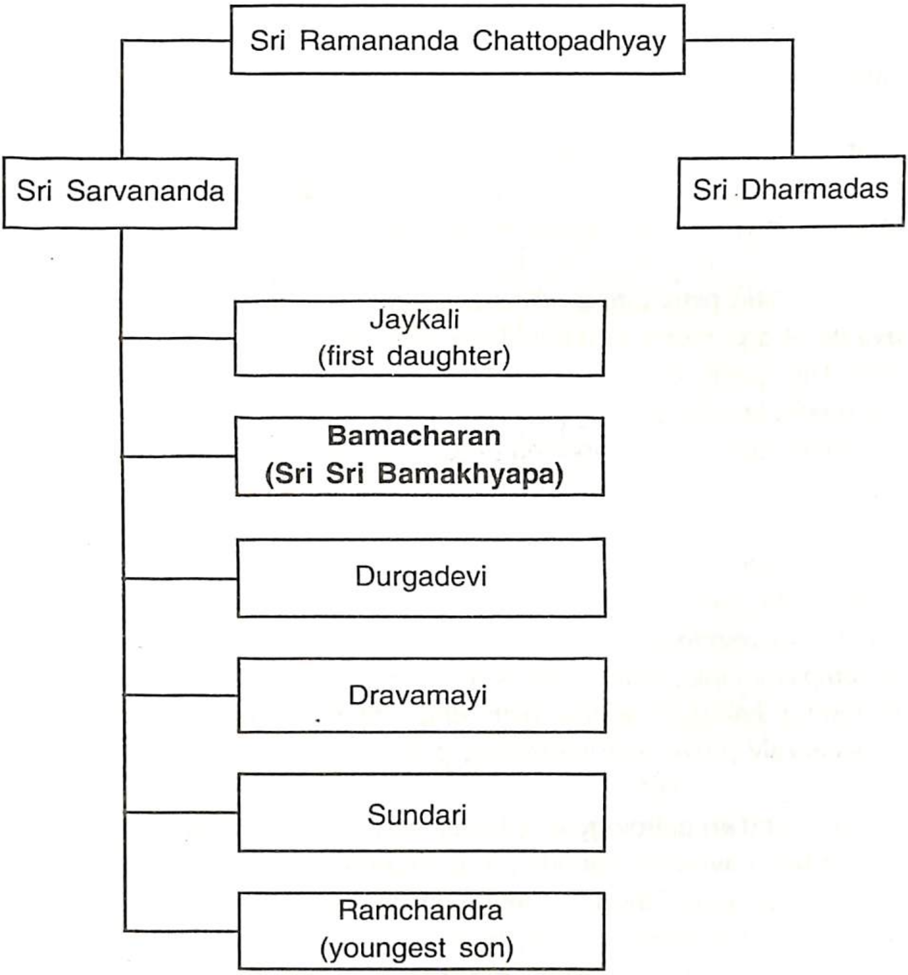
The auspicious time of birth of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa is especially noticeable. He was born at 3:15 a. m. in the last hour of Shiva-Chaturdashi in the month of Phalgun (February – March). Savior of the age Sri Sri Bamakhyapa appeared at the end of great sufferings when country was submerged under disgrace of religion and dark night of endless misery and trouble. On one side gloomy darkness was in the last phase of disappearance, on the other side rising of the auspicious delightful morning – in this majestic moment of Brahma-muhurta (48 minutes before sunrise) appeared the Shiva-Incarnation and Guru of the yuga Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Certainly, this was a destined, supremely auspicious time of birth fit to lead the country and people from dejection to hope. In fact, this was distinctly proved to be true throughout his grand mortal life by bright flame of supreme knowledge and divine light of devotion and salvation.

3.5 Family Identity

In this age, it is rare to find a holy family similar to one in which Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was born. Father Sarvananda Chattopadhyay was a true devotee of Universal Mother Tara; he used to compose Shyama-Sangits on a regular basis as an offering to savior Tarama. Under all circumstances, he was blissful. He was in one imaginative poet, song writer and composer, artist, and sadhak. Daily hardship and suffering of worldly life could not affect him. Mother of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, Rajkumari devi, also was devoted wife and supporter of spiritual life of her husband. She was in one religious, affectionate, kind hearted, service minded, and gentle. Her small living world was consisted of Universal Tarama, dearest husband and children. Father of Sarvananda Chattopadhyay was also a very pious man. He was deeply respectful to preserver of the universe Tarama. His character was full of spiritual qualities like truthfulness, righteousness, devotion, kind heartedness etc.

Purushottama Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was born in this sacred and highly spiritual family as the second child of Mother-worshipper Sarvananda Chattopadhyay. Jaykali was the first child of Sarvananda. Tthus, Shiva-Incarnation Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was the second child or first son of Sarvananda. Later on, three more daughters and one more son of Sarvananda were born – daughters were: Durgadevi, Dravamayi, and Sundari; sixth child or youngest son Ramchandra was born in Bengali calendar year 1257 (1850 AD).

Family identity of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa is described below:


Sri Ramananda Chattopadhyay
Sri Sarvananda
Sri Dharmadas
Jaykali
(first daughter)
Bamacharan
(Sri Sri Bamakhyapa)
Durgadevi
Dravamayi
Sundari
Ramchandra
(youngest son)

Family Identity of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa

3.6 Birth Chart

According to Vedic astrology or Jyotish, people accumulate karma in every life based on their actions and desires. They are reborn at the moment the planets move into a particular configuration. That configuration can then be studied to discover whether a person's past activities were pious or impious, and what events are most likely to occur in a person's future as a result.

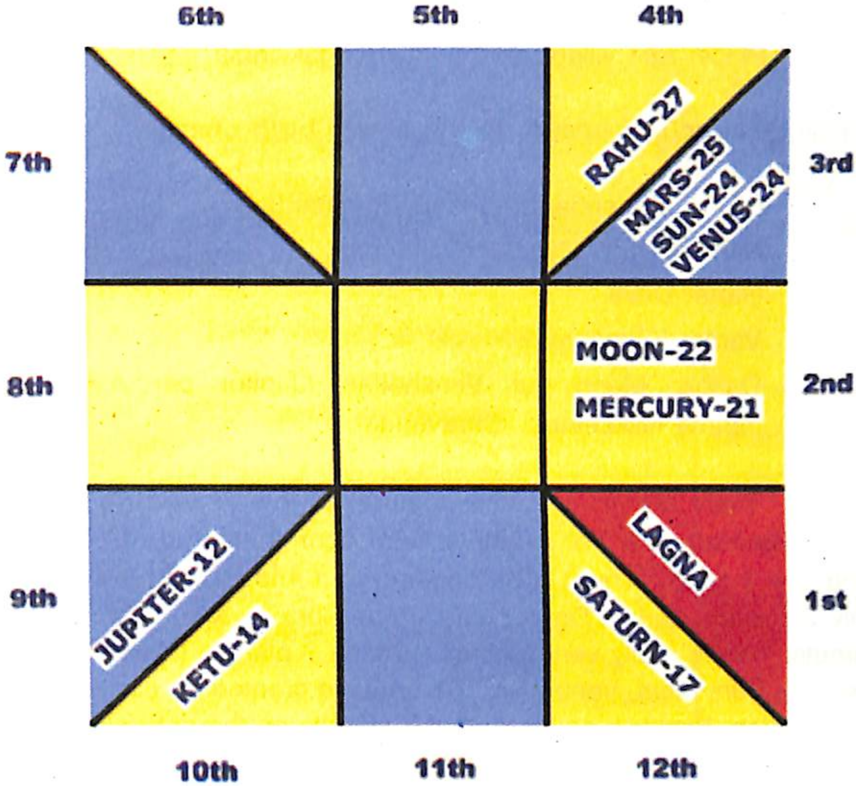
The planetary positions at the time of birth thus reveals the events of a person's present life as well as his or her past and future lives.The quality of a person's chart is judged by the position of the various planets in the zodiac – in the different signs and constellations. Each planet has a different influence over the person.

Shiva–Incarnation Sri Sri Bamakhyapa was a supreme yogi, majestic sadhak, and great spiritual leader of the age. Also, he had no married life and no pleasure from the relatives, and absolutely no luck on money matters. If astrology is true, his sufferings and noble accomplishments, both could be predicted from his divine birth chart. Following analysis of the birth chart of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa will conclusively prove this interesting point beyond any doubt.

Indian astrology is a highly complex subject and most of us do not have even a basic idea of it. Therefore, before we present the analysis of birth chart, a few words on some important Indian astrological terminologies may help the general readers to appreciate the prediction of incredible sadhana and siddhi of saint Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Accordingly, for the benefit of general readers, "Indian Predictive Astrology" is added as an Appendix 1.

Birth Chart of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa

Divine birth chart of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa is presented below:


6th
5th
4th
7th
3rd
RAHU-27
MARS-25
SUN-24
VENUS-24
8th
2nd
MOON-22
MERCURY-21
9th
1st
JUPITER-12
KETU-14
LAGNA
SATURN-17
10th
11th
12th

Note: Numbers indicated by the side of planet indicate nakshatra numbers; for example, Moon-22 means Moon is placed in Shravana Nakshatra (# 22 in the Nakshatra Table).

Birth time details of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa:

Year: Bengali calendar year 1244 (1838 AD)
Month: Bengali calendar month Phalgun.

Date: 12th Phalgun (24th February).

Day / Time: Thursday night at 3:15.

Lunar Day (Tithi): Dark Trayodashi attached Shiva-Chaturdashi.

Place: Atla village, Birbhum, Bengal, India.

Astrological details based on the above birth chart:

Lagna (Ascendant): Dhanu (Sagittarius).

Rashi (Sign): Makara (Capricorn).

Gana: Deva.

Varna: Kshatriya.

Dasha: Moon per Vimshottari (Jupiter per Ashtottari).
Janma Nakshatra: Shravana.

There are many special features of the above birth chart of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. For example, from Scorpio sign to Pisces sign, there are 7 signs. Thus, in Ascending (from Aries to Libra) there are only 2 planets and in Descending (from Libra to Aries) there are 7 planets. This is really very strange. These 7 planets (Saturn, Moon, Mercury, Sun, Mars, Venus, and Rahu) have created an extraordinary combination. Besides, as a result of 7 planets on the right side of the chart and only two planets on the left side of the chart, by aspect and conjunction, many great auspicious astrological yogas like Nishashanka Yoga, Kshetra Singhasan Yoga, Sanyas Yoga, Ekavali Yoga, etc. have been formed.

Another specialty of this chart is that according to placement of planets no planet is in exaltation, in debilitation, or even in mooltrikona. The most important feature of the chart is that Lagna-Lord (Sagittarius) Jupiter is placed in 9th house (Leo sign), and all 6 planets (Moon, Mercury, Sun, Mars, Venus, and Saturn) simultaneously aspect (an angular relationship between planetary positions in the birth charts) Jupiter. Among these planets, Sun, Mars, Venus, and Saturn have full (100%) aspect; Moon and Mercury have 75% aspect. As a result of these auspicious aspects, Jataka (person whose birth chart is being analyzed i.e. Sri Sri Bamakhyapa) was fully influenced by Taradevi who is Ishtadevi of Jupiter. Also, this created tendency of heroic sadhana (left-handed Tantrik mode of sadhana) and at the end complete establishment in divine path and custom. We are now presenting a detailed analysis of all 12 houses based on divine birth chart of saint Sri Sri Bamakhyapa.

Table of Birth Chart Analysis

Lagna or First House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
Lagna falls in Sagittarius sign. Therefore, lord of Lagna is Jupiter. Lagna signifies body. Accordingly, Jupiter is the owner of body of Jataka. Jupiter occupies 9th house (Leo sign), but fully (100%) aspects Lagna. Lagna-lord Jupiter is placed in Uttara Phalguni Nakshatra (in sign of Virgo, ruled by Mercury). Mercury is placed in the sign of Capricorn, ruled by Saturn.	Body complexion of Jataka is medium.
Jupiter is both Lagna-lord and lord of 4th house (Pisces–water sign). Also, Jupiter fully aspects Lagna from 9th house.	Jataka will have strongly built body and large eyes.
Moon makes 75% aspect on Lagna-lord Jupiter.	Jataka is born with a very good health and beautiful face like a boy.

Second House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
Moon and Mercury occupy 2nd house. Moon is in Capricorn sign.	Janma Rashi is Capricorn.
Janma Nakshatra is Shravana (no. 22), ruled by Moon.	Jataka was born in dasha of Moon (Vimshottari Dasha)
Eighth house falls under Cancer. Moon is the lord of Cancer. Thus, Moon is the lord of 8th house or lord of death. But Moon fully aspects 8th house from 2nd house.	Jataka is destined to receive full liberation.
Moon is in the 2nd house, in sign of Saturn (in Capricorn), and is fully aspected by Saturn from 12th house. Except Saturn, no other planet aspects Moon.	There is a definite indication of monetary problem and worldly sufferings.
Mercury occupies 2nd house along with Moon. Mercury is in Uttara Ashahra Nakshatra (in sign of Capricorn, ruled by Saturn). Mercury is fully aspected by friendly Saturn. Mercury is the lord of 7th (in Gemini sign) and 10th (in Virgo sign) houses. Mercury is in auspicious house or friendly Saturn's house.	Jataka is wise, truthful, possessor of melodious voice, and has obtained pure and sacred childish habit.
Second house primarily signifies wealth, expression, sentiment, etc. In this 2nd house, there is a conjunction of two planets – Moon and Mercury. Moon represents mind and Mercury is lively symbol of sentiment, memory, intellect, poetry, philosophy, chemistry, astrology, medicine, etc.	Jataka will possess extraordinary intellect, great memory, sweet singing ability, love and devotion; natural talent in astrology, medicine, etc.

Second house is ruled by ascetic and completely desireless sadhak Saturn. In this house of Saturn, Moon and Mercury are placed. Also, they are fully aspected by Saturn from 12th house.	Jataka is both dispassionate sadhak and also under certain circumstances fierce and rigid; toughness and mildness are his features.

Third House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
Sun, Mars, and Venus occupy 3rd house. Sun and Venus are placed in Shatabhisha Nakshatra, and Mars is in Poorva Bhadrapada. Thus, all three planets are in the nakshatra of Saturn. Sun is the lord of 10th house and is in enemy house, house of Saturn (3rd house falls in Aquarius). Also, Sun is placed together with enemy planet Venus and is aspected by Rahu.	Pleasure and peace from brother and sisters, and other relatives have been spoiled.
Particularly, Venus is lord of both 6th and 11th houses. Thus, Venus is malefic to Jataka and owner of labha or gain.	Happiness from relatives is destroyed. Also, renunciation of home by Jataka is foreseen.
In spite of the bad house and 75% aspect by Saturn, Sun is placed along with friendly planet Mars.	Jataka is identified to be uncommonly spirited, firm, bold, and glorious.
Saturn, lord of 3rd house and aspected by Rahu, is placed in 12th house	There is a symptom of loosing father in early age and living away from the kith and kin.

Venus is in 3rd house.	More than one sister could be born before and after Jataka.
Mars, lord of 5th and 12th houses, is located in 3rd house and aspected by Rahu.	There could be loss of brother and wealth.
In addition, there is 75% aspect by Saturn on Mars.	Untimely death of brother's son is possible.
In this important 3rd house, Jupiter has full aspect and Saturn has 75% aspect on Sun, Mars, and Venus.	Jataka may be deprived of worldly pleasures from kith and kin, but he will gain realization, control, firmness, and unattachment.
Fourth House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
Rahu occupies 4th house or Kendra house. Rahu is in Revati Nakshatra. Fourth house signifies happiness, relatives, learning, and mother.	Jataka may not be happy from home life and matters concerning mother. There is a tendency of renunciation.
Rahu is located in the house of Jupiter and in the nakshatra of Jupiter. Aalso, Rahu is 75% aspected by Jupiter and 25% aspected by lord of 8th house Moon.	Mother of Jataka should have long life.
Rahu is located in 4th house,	Disturbance in worldly learning of Jataka in numerous occasions could be predicted.

In addition to aspected by Jupiter and Moon, Rahu is also 25% aspected by Mercury and 50% aspected by Saturn	Jataka should possess a very high level spiritual knowledge, concentration; peace of mind and happiness are foreseen.
Fifth House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
There is no planet in the 5th house but Lagna-lord Jupiter has auspicious aspect on lord of 5th house Mars.	Knowledge and devotion of Jataka are completely focused in the religious path towards Ishtadevi. Jataka will be very kind to common people and animal. Also, there will be wonderful integration of honesty, generosity, and compassion in the life of Jataka.
In addition to Jupiter, 5th house is 25% aspected by Venus and Mars, and 75% aspected by Mercury and Moon.	Spiritual thinking, creative power, loving nature, and profound single-mindedness distinctly prevalent in Jataka.
Sixth House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
There is no planet in 6th house, but lord of 6th house Venus occupies friendly 3rd house. In this bad house, there are many aspects from following	Public scandal, fear of enemies, and distress related to maternal

planets: 100% aspect from Saturn and Mars, 25% aspect from Jupiter, 50% aspect from Mercury and Moon, and 75% aspect from Sun and Venus.	uncle are possible in worldly life. However, fame, good reputation, and bliss in spiritual life; and defeat of enemies are predicted.
Seventh House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
There is no planet in 7th house. Lord of 7th house Mercury occupies friendly 2nd house. There is no aspect of Mercury in 7th house.	Marriage of Jataka is not foreseen.
Venus, Sun, and Mars have 50% aspects on 7th house, but there was no dasha of feminine planet (Venus, Moon, etc.) during his youth (suitable for marriage time).	Auspicious condition for marriage has been spoiled.
Lord of 7th house Mercury does not occupy this house. But on this house there are 50% aspects from Venus, Sun, and Mars; and 75% aspect from Saturn.	In worldly life, in lieu of usual family pleasure with wife, there are indications of spiritual bliss and happiness. 7th house is mainly connected with spouse. However, in this case, Bhairavi Shakti is prevalent in the ascetic life of Jataka.
Eighth House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
There is no planet in 8th house, but lord of this house Moon, aspected by Saturn, occupies friendly 2nd house.	Jataka could suffer from worldly affairs, but destined to rise to

	become a very high level spiritual person.
Eighth house is known to be house of death; however, there are auspicious aspects on this house – full aspects from Rahu, Mercury, and Moon; and 50% aspect from Saturn.	Long life, pilgrimage, and capacity to perform many supernatural acts are ensured.
Ninth House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
Lagna-lord Jupiter occupies 9th house. Jupiter is in the nakshatra of Mercury, and in the house of friendly planet Sun. Ninth house mainly signifies mantra, religion, pilgrimage, fortune, wisdom, etc.	Jataka is extraordinarily knowledgeable, wise, and full of divinity. This ensures his position as a rare master in the spiritual world.
Lagna-lord Jupiter is in friendly Sun's house (Leo), and there are aspects of six planets on Jupiter – from Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, and Saturn.	Jataka will be a supremely powerful yogi and sacrificing ascetic.
Sagittarius is well known as fire sign; Jupiter is the lord of the Sagittarius sign; Jupiter is also Lagna-lord; again, Jupiter (owner of fire sign) is in the house of Sun (Leo).	Jataka will possess tremendous mental power.
Jupiter occupies the house of religion – 9th house; also, there are majestic 100% aspects on Jupiter from six planets including full aspect of the owner of mantra Mars.	Mind, intelligence, religion, mantra, wisdom, etc. – everything of Jataka is fully engrossed by Ishtadevi of Jupiter Tarama. As a result, knowledge, devotion, action, love – all are

	completely surrendered to Tarasadhana. Along with this, noble qualities like compassion, friendship, forgiveness, and wisdom etc. have become his inborn worth. Consequently, it is almost certain that Jataka will be self-realized spiritual master.
Tenth House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
Ketu occupies 10th house, and Ketu is in the nakshatra of Chitra. Lord of 10th house Mercury occupies friendly 2nd house, owned by Saturn; also, Mercury is aspected by friendly planet Saturn.	Jataka may be deprived of father's property.
Position of Ketu is more or less auspicious.	Jataka would be famous and glorious.
Tenth house signifies karma. Rahu has full aspect on Ketu. In addition, Mercury and Moon have 50% aspects, and Sun and Venus have 75% aspects on Ketu.	Jataka is destined to be a great organizer of vast spiritual rehabilitation.
Eleventh House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
Eleventh house signifies income. There is no planet in 11th house. Lord of 11th house Venus occupies friendly 3rd house owned by Saturn. Jupiter, Moon, and Mercury have 25% aspects; and Mars, Sun, and Venus have 50% aspects on	Jataka has great difficulties in monetary earnings. There could be change of residence on numerous

11th house.	occasions. In spite of these problems, there is great indication that Jataka will gain incredible spiritual wealth and attain siddhi.
Twelfth House and Planetary Positions	**Results**
In 12th house, Saturn occupies house of Mars (Scorpio sign). Saturn is in the Anuradha nakshatra. Saturn is the lord of 2nd and 3rd houses.	Jataka is deprived of family life; as a result, detachment and indifference are very much prevalent in him. Besides, living in places away from home is foreseen.
Twelfth house signifies loss and pilgrimage. On 12th house, Jupiter has 75% aspect, Mars and Venus have 25% aspect, and Rahu has full aspect.	Jataka will make pilgrimage and travel to sacred places. Also, gift of spiritualism, compassion, and generosity etc. are also predictable.

All incredible results based on our above analysis of 12 houses, nine planets, aspects, and different auspicious conjunctions in birth chart of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa have been materialized in his long and divine life. This could be very well noticed in our subsequent discussion about his majestic activities in early, middle, and end lila parts.

3.7 Act of Naming and Wonderful Realization of the Name

A supremely divine child was born in Atla village, two miles west of Tarapith, at 3:15 a.m. in the night of the Trayodashi attached Shiva-Chaturdashi on Thursday, 12th Phalgun (24th February) of Bengali calendar year 1244 (1838 AD) in the small house of Tarama's devotee Sarvananda Chattopadhyay. However, just after birth, baby made a surprise. New born baby did not cry in usual manner but remained motionless. Everybody became astonished by witnessing this unprecedented amazing scene. As there was no sound from baby's mouth, everybody in the house assumed that baby was unnatural and dumb. Consequently, house was filled with grief. Mother Rajkumari Devi was delighted by looking at her healthy and beautiful baby of medium complexion, but at the same time she was very upset due to his dumbness. However, father Sarvananda was unperturbed. He was happy to feel that universal Tarama gave him a son. Thus, even the baby was dumb, he wholeheartedly accepted this son as a gift from Tarama. But visiting neighbors in the morning expressed sadness to Rajkumari Devi.

Subsequently, father Sarvananda performed the traditional puja on 6th day from the day of birth, but baby did not show any excitement, as if he was in deep meditation. Mother Rajkumari Devi was attending her baby. Only sister of the baby Jaykali used to sit almost all day near her little brother and try to communicate with him. In this way, month after month, time was passing by. During the age of usual crawling, everybody was amazed to notice that the baby did not want to move. When baby was supposed to sleep, he used to sit without uttering any word.

In proper time, following tradition, Sarvananda celebrated occasion of the auspicious Annaprashan (first day of feeding baby with solid food like rice-pudding). Although baby was dumb, he was the first son of family. Therefore, Sarvananda spent whatever possible within his limited means. Now, name had to be assigned to baby; but, baby was dumb, what name would be fitting for him? He and his wife Rajkumari Devi could not figure it out. As a result, act of naming could not be performed on the day of Annaprashan.

In course of time, baby became two and half years old. Often Sarvananda used to make his beautiful but dumb boy talking. But in one day, a miraculous incident was happened. Through this incident, baby himself disclosed his name. Like other days, on that day also, Sarvananda was asking his baby to say "Ba Ba". Sarvananda thought that like other days, the dumb baby would remain silent. But in lieu of that, all on a sudden, the baby spoke for the first time. Consequently, Sarvananda was very much delighted; he called dearest wife Rajkumari Devi, daughter Jaykali, and other members of the house to witness this wonderful act. Whenever Sarvananda was asking to say "Ba Ba", the baby was replying with "Bam". Devotee of Tarama Sarvananda was extremely happy to notice that the first word from the baby was "Bam"; his dearest Ishtadevi Tarama did not make his child dumb, baby could speak. In the course of time, that name "Bam" became "Bama".

"Bama" means Taradevi. She stands on the chest of Shiva with Her left foot in front. Consequently, She is called "Bama". Shiva is lying on Bama's or Tara's feet. Thus, Shiva holding feet of Bama on chest becomes "Bamacharan". Sarvananda himself was totally devoted to Tarama; his whole existence was engrossed by Tarama; he gave the name "Bamacharan" to his dearest son as if he was permanently offering child to the lotus feet of Tarama. Through the perfect name of "Bamacharan", child was dedicated for ever to the feet of "Bama" or Tara for shelter, bliss, and total surrender. In fact, "Bamacharan" did attain feet of "Bama". Shiva Himself is lying for ever in super meditation as a dead body by holding Lotus Feet of Tarama. Thus, Mahadeva or Shiva becomes super yogi by integrating feet of Mahashakti "Bama" or Tara in His heart. "Bamacharan" incarnated as a living symbol of that super yogi Shiva. He arrived to preach the glory of "Bama", and to rescue distressed people of the world through surrender to the Lotus Feet of "Bama". Thus, significance of the name of "Bamacharan" given to this child of Sarvananda was fully realized in the later period; indeed, this type of realization of name is a rare incident in the history of spiritual world.

Perhaps, Sarvananda could not even dream what a wonderful realized name he had given to his son. In subsequent period, this majestic name had tremendous influence on spiritual life of Bengal and whole India. By holding feet of "Bama" and by remaining in super bliss condition all the time, "Bamacharan" became "khyapa", and has become immortal in the history of Indian sadhana as "Bamakhyapa". Whoever resides in eternal bliss all the time, he is indeed the only worthy person to be called "Bamacharan" or "Bamakhyapa". Only he knows the glory of this nectar who has the fortune to taste it.

The endless bliss coming out at every moment from the lotus feet of "Bama" or Tarama is continuously flowing across the universe. Taste of even a drop of it could make any sadhak mad in happiness; then, he would love Tarama more than his life by body, mind, speech, thought - by everything he possess; more he loves, more eternal bliss he gets. Consequently, he forgets place, time, people – everything; residing in bliss all the time, drinking that nectar in the heart, he becomes liberated. But common people can not understand this divine feeling, and accordingly neglect him as mad or khyapa. However, in that condition, khyapa stays in a much higher spiritual level – far away from trifle honor or insult; remains in state of supreme bliss because of feeling of divine unification of his own soul with the eternal soul of Tara.

Sadhak of any form of Tarama who is integrator of all ideas can attain this eternal blissful condition. If this is the case for an ordinary siddha sadhak, what was the eternal blissful state of Shiva-Avatara "Bamakhyapa"? This can not be imagined and impossible to express in words; only with divine grace, a little can be realized. That two and half year's old divine child "Bamacharan" might be engrossed with this eternal bliss before uttering the first word "Bam". In all ages, by the grace of "Bama" or Tarama, sadhakas like Vashishtha, Dattatreya, Durvasa, Bhrigu, Parashurama, etc. were completely captivated with this eternal bliss. When these sadhakas could taste the eternal bliss, it is quite natural, Avatara of Shiva (Shiva is the endless source of eternal bliss) "Bamacharan", even as a baby, must had been immersed in Tarama's endless eternal nectar. Thus, keeping himself as dumb up to two and half years and uttering the first word as "Bam" – all of these uncommon incidents are definitely expected from the divine Avatara of Shiva "Bamacharan".

The fact that Tarasadhak Sarvananda gave name "Bamacharan" to his child also follows the natural path of divine personality. He never imagined that this sweet name would be one day fully realized. But this act was really controlled by "Bama" or Tarama; keeping Her in disguise, by naming "Bamacharan" through Her dear devotee Sarvananda, She arranged to initiate the first chapter of "Bama" lila.

Once a devotee asked Shiva-Avatara "Bamakhyapa" about his name; in response, he replied in his usual amazing style – "My name is Bama, adding charan (feet) it becomes khyapa." Real significance of his name "Bamacharan" or "Bamakhyapa" could be understood through this deep symbolic and mysterious declaration.

Tarama, "Bama", "Bamacharan", and "Bamakhyapa" – all are one and indifferent – this concept is clearly embodied in the aforesaid disclosure. Thus, like name and owner of name, "Bama" and "Bamacharan" are one and the same. Incarnation – coming from absolute to dual form - is to enjoy act of diversity and for the benefit of the world; like traveling from eternal to divine activity (lila).

For the above events - Dumbness of "Bama" up to two and half years, and utterance of first word as "Bam", writer (Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay) is very much grateful to Bhairavdas Jnanananda Avadhut. By the grace of Tarama and Sri Sri Bamakhyapa, for a long time, he provided information to this writer about numerous unpublished and unnatural lila of Sri Sri Bamakhyapa.

3.8 Babyhood

Baby Bamacharan was growing gradually in a sacred atmosphere of father's house. Poverty was always a companion of domestic life of Tarasadhak Sarvananda. However, due to spiritual songs of Mother worshipper Sarvananda together with sweet sound from violin, divinity was always prevalent in his poverty stricken home. As a result, severe poverty could not create a horror in his family; on the contrary, poverty was always present in his house in pleasant form. God has always taken birth as Avatara in this kind of poor but

pure, pleasant, and religious parent; Jesus, Shankaracharya, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nanak, Kabir, Ramkrishna, etc. are the glorious examples of this fact.

Thus, in this pure and poor but pleasant house made of clay, baby Bamacharan started learning to walk in tumbling steps. Child Bamacharan was growing slowly under unending love and affection of father Sarvananda, Mother Rajkumari Devi, and sister Jaykali. Sarvananda was always a self-forgetful, simple, and happy person, and never cared about worldly things. Whenever time was available, he used to go to holy temple of Kali in the village; sitting quietly under feet of Shyamakali, he was getting peace. He had some land of agriculture, and he was trying to manage the domestic expenditure with whatever little income was receivable from cultivation of this small land; but it was very tough; even then, Sarvananda was unperturbed. Dedicated wife Rajkumari Devi was trying her best to manage domestic affairs with this meager income; how to solve this monetary problem was always in her mind. Father side of Rajkumari Devi was quite solvent; but husband Sarvananda did not want to receive any help from father-in-law; in this respect, he was very idealist and spirited.

There was poverty but no indignity in the domestic life of Sarvananda. Consequently, he was free from the bondage of poverty; poverty is a loser only to love; Sarvananda had that wealth of love in abundance. Thus, rich in love Sarvananda was a very happy man - poverty could not stand before him.

Also, Rajkumari Devi was always filled with love from her husband; she was daughter of a rich parent but wife of a poor husband; still, she was very happy. With the sweet strength of profound love received from the dearest husband, she could undertake great fights against the poverty stricken domestic life.

Gradually, Bamacharan reached to the boyhood; in other side, family of Sarvananda was also growing; one by one, three more daughters were born – they were Durga, Dravamayi, and Sundari respectively. Consequently, now poverty was really magnified. However, as usual, Sarvananda was not disturbed. In spite of this domestic poverty, often, ever-happy Sarvananda used to visit Shyamakali temple in Atla village; frequently, in the temple, he used to sing with full heart songs in tearful eyes to please Shyamakali; sometimes, he used to bring also daughter Jaykali, and son Bama under his flank, to Shyamakali temple. Accordingly, under the poor but pleasant atmosphere Bamacharan was growing slowly.

3.9 Boyhood

Child Bamacharan gradually became a boy. Right from the childhood; attitude, gesture, and conversation of Bamacharan was not like an ordinary boy; his nature was usually calm, serious, and introvert. Because of his uncommon simplicity and absent-mindedness, he was known to be "howhre" or stupid; but Bamacharan had no concern for this. Boy Bamacharan used to make idol of gods with clay and worshipped alone with great sincerity using fruit, flower, and water; domestic poverty could not disturb him. Bama was residing in the blissful world created by him. This healthy boy of medium complexion, who was pure and beautiful like flower, was loved by everybody – his family members, relatives, and even village people; but villagers used to call him "khyapa" or mad, and sometimes "howhre" or stupid, due to his self-forgetfulness and uncommon behavior. Also, even before Bama, sister Jaykali was called by villager as "khyepi" or mad lady. Jaykali was really born sadhika. Ever blissful Sarvananda had great affection for these two uncommon children - "khyapa" and "khyepi"; because, only with these two children, his nature and sadhana could find spiritual commonality. Thus, the family of Tara sadhak Sarvananda was really blessed.

Rajkumari Devi was urging husband for education of Bama. She was explaining that in this house of want, it would be a great help if eldest son Bama after getting some education could perform the job of a priest. Accordingly, Sarvananda agreed. On an auspicious day, he brought Bama to the holy Shyamakali temple in his village. This Shyamakali temple was a very favorite place to him; all thoughts and sufferings of domestic life could be disappeared at this sacred place. This place could bring peace and happiness in his mind; quite often, he sang songs in the temple of Tarakali or Shyamakali. Frequently, his little daughter Jaykali also accompanied him; she was like Shyamakali in the form of small girl; like her father, Jaykali also loved this Kali temple; she used to dance and sing in her own mind in front of Shyamakali. In subsequent period, Jaykali became a siddha sadhika in Mahapith Tarapith (more will be discussed later). Like father and sister, this temple of Shyamakali was very dear to Bamacharan. He would lose self-possession by looking at the idol of Shyamakali; the majestic idol also would reciprocate with more glows after seeing the divine boy.

Sarvananda brought Bama to the temple and asked him to offer prayer at the feet of Shyamakali. Sarvananda also prayed to Mother Shyamakali for the education of his dearest boy. Bamacharan was incarnated to teach the world and his father prayed for primary education of Avatara! Surely, Universal Mother Tarama or Shyamakali smirked at this amusing event.

Anyway, Sarvananda got Bama admitted at the village primary school. Earlier Bama was called "howhre" or stupid, now another name "chova" or imbecile was added. However, Bama had no concern by what name, "howhre" or "chova", coevals and neighbors would call him; as usual, he was unconcerned and unperturbed. Although Bamacharan was famous as "howhre" or "chova", he was quite intelligent in studies. Within a short time, he learnt vowels and consonants, and also addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; gradually, he was introduced to Shubhankari (a system of arithmetical calculation introduced by Shubhankar); but puzzle of Shubhankari was found to be quite complex and crooked like worldly affairs. As a result, he did not like to study this by sitting inside small primary school.

It was much more enjoyable to him to go out in the open field near Chile river at the end of the village to walk like a free bird under the vast sky, to enjoy beautiful natural scenarios like countless waves over the green paddy-plant; to watch flight of white geese in air, movement of white cloud in the blue sky, flying kingfishers in river bank, etc. Sometimes he used to hear the stoical sound of birds. As a result, mind of imaginative Bama used to fly over unknown places. Bama could feel the unification of his mind with the nature; more Bama would become speechless, more nature would become expressive. In every form of nature, Supreme Nature Tarama Herself gracefully resides; indeed, Tarama is manifested in every kind of natural beauty. Thus, creator and seer used to be integrated in wonderful atmosphere of silence and resoundness.

Blue sky, air, river, trees, green paddy-field, etc. – everything to Bama belonged to Tarama. Thus, whatever he acquired from nature, everything was offered to Tarama – like worshipping goddess Ganges with sacred water of Ganges River; but the style of his offering was quite uncommon: sometimes, climbing on a tree, after collection of fruit, he used to eat a portion of it and then offered to Tarama saying, "Eat Tarama"; the sincerity of his divine offering was so intense that his fellow companions could feel as if Tarama really came and ate. Again, after plucking flower from the plant, he used to throw it towards sky as offering to Tarama with the words "Accept Tarama"; certainly, this was the perfect offering to the goddess who represents emptiness (Shunyamayi). Thus, these were the extraordinary mantras and styles of offerings by Bama.

Villagers and companions of Bama used to laugh at this type of offerings and would taunt by calling him "howhre" or "chova". In their opinion, these offerings were useless because proper Sanskrit mantras were not used. Also, no prescribed rituals were followed. Thus, Bama did not learn how to offer to deity; his "Eat Tarama" and "Accept Tarama" were absolutely unscriptural. Therefore, Tarama could never accept such offerings of Bama. Thus, in conclusion, they thought Bama was just a mad and idiotic boy.

But villagers and neighbors did not understand that Tarama was gladly accepting this kind of offerings from Her khyapa son; She looks at the heart of devotee, She knows other's mind, and offering according to strict code of worship might be absent. Also, most of the time, offering in accordance with scripture is just lifeless dry empty rites. Thus, Tarama must have liked the simple, easy, soaked with intense love, and lively offering from Bama, which was also glorified with heartfelt word "Ma" (Mother), much more than the formal but lifeless offering. Although She is the queen of the universe, still, She is ever hankering to hear this sweet word "Ma"; She is always in an excited state for the all-devouring hunger of the sincere call of "Ma" from Her ever-loving children. In response to heartfelt call from Her children, She is always moving with the endless motherly affection like flow of river filled with melted compassion. Thus, surely, She had always accepted the simple offering of Bama filled with magic word "Ma". The happiness of acceptance of offering was not just for Tarama, this was also valid for Her affectionate son Bamacharan. However, endless sweet feeling of this uncommon offering and acceptance was a secret matter between Mother and son, no other could enjoy it.

Quite often, from the primary school, boy Bamacharan used to go to bank of the Chile River; walking around in own happiness used to make heartfelt conversation with Tarama. She was everything to Bamacharan; Tarama was always present in his sleep, dream, eating, walk, speech, mind, and heart – in all activities; all is Tarama and Tarama is all – right from his childhood, this supreme philosophy of omnipresence (Brahma-Darshana) was always the integral part of Bama's life. In the spiritual history of India, this example of someone maintaining the supreme omnipresence idea throughout his life is indeed very rare – almost never happened before. Stories discussed in next two sections provide extraordinary proof that the boy Bamacharan was always deeply engrossed with this Brahma-Darshana.

3.10 Stars in the Sky and Trance

One day, boy Bamacharan walked out from the house and standing at nearby place was gazing at the sky in total astonishment. Meanwhile, mother Rajkumari Devi was calling Bamacharan for lunch; but instead of replying mother, Bamacharan was watching the sky with a fixed look. Rajkumari Devi was worried about her son, and started searching for him. Subsequently, she found her son and was surprised to see that Bamacharan was looking at the sky in motionless condition. She came hurriedly to her son and gave a jerk to his hand. Then, absorbedness of Bamacharan was broken. Worried mother asked, "What you have been watching?" Bama replied in soft tone, "Mother, I have been watching stars in the sky." She was stunned to notice such a deep raptness in her son. This kind of drowning in profound meditation was a regular incident for Bama.

Sarveshvar Let was a cultivator of agricultural field owned by Sarvananda; he was a share-cropper, a very trust-worthy and experienced peasant. Boy Bamacharan used to address him as "Sarveshvarda" (elder brother Sarveshvar). In his off time, Sarveshvar worked as a house-man of the Sarvananda's house. One day, Rajkumari Devi sent Bama to cultivating field with meal for Sarveshvar Let. Then, in mid day, boy Bamacharan was carrying meal for Sarveshvar. All of a sudden, looking at the endless blue sky, Bamacharan was stunned. He was engrossed in the meditation of Tarama, who appeared to him as a goddess in the blue sky wearing sky-blue colored cloth. Sarveshvar Let saw him from the distance. He thought that as Bamacharan was "howhre", this kind of emotional act was natural and happened many times before. Accordingly, this event repeated itself another day; so, he came in front of Bama and asked for food. But there was no reply from Bamacharan, he was in deep meditation by looking at the sky. It was not possible for an ordinary peasant like Sarveshvar to realize the significance of deep meditative state. Therefore, in an angry mood, he struck Bamacharan with a truncheon for driving cattle. As a result, Bamacharan returned to senses; his mind was diverted from consciousness to worldliness; he replied "I have been watching stars in the sky." Then, he delivered food in the hands of Sarveshvar.

In the evening after returning from the field, Sarveshvar Let described the incident to Sarvananda and Rajkumari Devi. Sarvananda was very pleased by observing this absorbedness in Bamacharan about Tarama; he was also a man of the world of raptness. Therefore, he knew the secret of this deep meditation. This is what is Brahma-Darshana; seeing all in one, and one in all.

In everything of the world, Bamacharan could see that one and only one, non-dual, Brahmamayi Tarama. Using Brahma-Shila of Tarapith as center stage, Tarama performed divine play with him; this was very significant; all of these visible forms of universal nature was Tarama in front of Bamacharan. Similarly, even in his heart also, super meditative Tarama was present in her most majestic beautiful form. Again, beyond this visible and invisible worlds, there is grand universal form (Maha-Vishva). In complete integration with this Maha-Vishva, Bamacharan realized the super-conscious, super-meditative, infinite, endless, formless Brahmamayi Tarama – who is supreme combined form of Purusha (the universal cosmic male) and Prakriti (the Mother nature) – perfect saguna Brahman (Brahman with attributes). This form and also formless – the endless ocean of supreme-consciousness was the "stars in the sky" of Bamacharan. Quite often, in this super Brahman consciousness and supreme Brahma meditation, Bamacharan was engrossed. It was not possible for ordinary people to understand this eternally simplistic Brahman consciousness of Bamacharan; even distinguished wise, yogis, sadhus, and pious persons could not realize this in spite of observing him for a long time.

3.11 Visit to Tarapith

Focusing on Tarama, time was passing by for boy Bamacharan. Consequently, his pleasure, pain, good, bad, sin, virtue, pride, and honor – everything was being performed daily keeping Tarama as the central objective in life. Meanwhile, family was growing; Ramchandra, youngest son of Sarvananda was born.

Ramchandra was born in Bengali calendar year 1257(1850 AD); Bamacharan was then thirteen year old teenager; Bamacharan often visited temple of Shyamakali at Atla village to spend quiet time in solitude; sometimes, he would visit house of his neighbor Durgadas Sarkar, who was a close friend of Sarvananda. Durgadas had lot of affection for Bamacharan.

Sometimes, absent-mindedly, Bamacharan would visit Mahapith Tarapith on foot. At the temple, he would enjoy with full heart the majestic beauty of Tarama. In his own mind, he would talk to Tarama. On few occasions, he went to Tarapith with father Sarvananda. Also, during festivals like Ratha-Yatra, Tarapuja, etc. he visited Tarapith with parents and sisters. Quite often, at the temple of Tarama, sadhak and musician Sarvananda sang songs playing violin. Boy Bamacharan in state of raptness, sitting by Sarvananda, gazing at the idol of Tarama, used to cry with tears hearing that sweet Shyama-Sangit.

Boy Bamacharan visited also magnificent maha-shmashana of Tarapith. This vast maha-shmashana was so dangerous that even in day time people were afraid to enter alone. Deep darkness was usually present in the dense forest even in the day time. Dead person's skulls and human skeletons would scatter around this ancient maha-shmashana. Dangerous poisonous snakes, foxes, and terrible dogs used to roam freely in the midst of it. There was also inflow of corpses on continuous basis. Child Bamacharan was stunned by viewing the grand ancient maha-shveta shimul tree at the Sripadapadma of Tarama in the heart of this dangerous maha-shmashana. That ancient tree was occupying a large area of the maha-shmashana. Along with father, boy Bamacharan also paid homage to that sacred tree. In subsequent years, this ancient maha-shveta shimul tree had played a glorious part in unforgettable lila of Bamacharan.

In response to an infallible attraction, quite frequently, Bamacharan used to travel from Atla village to visit Tarama; enjoying the presence of Tarama as much as possible, he would go back to Atla before sunset.

3.12 Musical Play and Open-air Opera on Krishna

Meanwhile, Bamacharan completed his studies in the primary school, but economic condition of the family was not good enough to undertake further education. Furthermore, it was very tough for Sarvananda and Rajkumari Devi to arrange basic need of food and shelter for their six children. Even Sarvananda could understand that it was not any more possible to run the big family with meager income from the agricultural land; something had to be found out immediately; otherwise, family could not be maintained.

After a lot of consideration, Sarvananda found a way, which would meet the demand of family and help Bamacharan for higher studies, and also it would be beneficial in future. Accordingly, Sarvananda taught Bamacharan the stories from popular Hindu epics and scriptures like *Ramayana, Mahabharata, Purana, Chandi,* etc.; besides, he made dearest son Bama to memorize these in the style of yatra (open-air opera) and palagan (musical play). Sarvananda was at the same time lyrist, composer, and singer. Therefore, it was not difficult for him to teach his son Bama. In addition, he taught him well Shyama-Sangits of sadhakas like Ramprasad, Kamalakanta, and Neelamvara.

Bama had in-born sweet voice; on the top of it, with excellent training from father and also due to his brilliance, he became quickly a master singer. Thus, utmost sincerity and emotion of Bama were added to his sweet voice. As a result, villagers were charmed with his songs. It was for the first time, villagers and neighbors could realize that khyapa Bamacharan had a divine attractive power to mesmerize people. Everybody used to be captivated by hearing the wonderful songs, which would be delivered in deep solemn voice of father Sarvananda together with fine sweet voice of boy Bamacharan; additionally, people used to be stunned by the extraordinary emotional state of Bamacharan. Consequently, Sarvananda and Bamacharan were receiving request for opera and musical songs not only from local Atla village, but also from nearby villages. Thus, Sarvananda along with boy Bamacharan were performing on a regular basis "Krishna Yatra" (open-air opera on Lord Krishna) in many villages like Atla, Dipara, Tarapur, Kahrkahria, Saralpur Udaypur, Kavichandrapur, and Bamdevpur.

In the "Krishna Yatra", Sarvananda was the main singer and Bamacharan used to act as Krishna. Also, Bamacharan would sing along with his father. People would become disinterested in worldly affairs by listening sweet jingling sound from the violin of Sarvananda. Consequently, it could be very difficult for spectators to control tears when Sarvananda played some sad tunes. In this way, by performing musical plays and open-air operas in different houses and villages, Sarvananda was making some income. Many villagers could not pay him by cash but used to greet Sarvananda and Bamacharan with rice, rice krispie cereal, brown sugar etc.; likewise time was passing by. Meanwhile, child Ramchandra became six years old; Sarvananda included Ramchandra also in the musical group. Now Sarvananda could make performance from village to village with two sons. Thus, he used to be the lead singer accompanying violin and sons Bam and Ram would sing to support him.

Often during rest period in day time, village women used to offer with pleasure cream of milk, rice krispie cereal, brown sugar, etc. to both Bam and Ram; as Ram was a kid, he used to eat everything. However, elder Bam would eat some and would bring rest of the food at home for mother and sisters.

Thus, wondering from village to village, Sarvananda was performing various musical plays and open-air operas - sometime "Krishna Yatra", sometime "Krishna-Balarama Yatra" (Krishna and Balarama were two brothers according to the epic *Mahabharata*). Frequently, Bamacharan acted as Balai (Balarama) and Ram as Kanai (Krishna). Consequently, "Krishna-Balarama Yatra" was becoming very popular.

3.13 Trance in Music

One day, in the temple of Tarapith, "Krishna-Balarama Yatra" was being performed; in the compound of Tarama, Sarvananda started playing violin; boy Bamacharan acting as "Balarama" and child Ramchandra acting as Krishna were also present; along with father, Bamacharan started singing sweet songs. Tarapith is a divine place of Goddess Tarama, and on the top of it, the atmosphere was being charged with melodious sweet songs from Sarvananda and Bamacharan. Consequently mesmerized spectators were enjoying that wonderful charming songs. All on a sudden, boy Bamacharan entered into the world of ecstasy; went into trance in music; found place in the lapse of super-meditative Tarama in eternal bliss.

Meanwhile, the senseless physical body of Bamacharan was lying on ground; music was stopped; worried spectators came forward to verify; there was a very loud uproar; some went to bring water to put him back to sense. Child Ramchandra was trembling with fear by looking at the brother's senseless body. Some remarked that there was possession of Tarama on Bama. Sadhak Sarvananda was gazing at the stony idol of Tarama. He was feeling very fortunate; his dearest son Bamacharan carried his songs to the lotus feet of his Ishtadevi Tarama. He realized that his Bama was sleeping under ever protective lapse of his Ishtadevi Tarama; at the proper moment, She will bring back from Her lapse the physical body of Bama.

He had noticed it all, before trance of Bama. Therefore, without any anxiety, he started again singing Shyama-Sangit with great pleasure. Spectators could not understand this trance of Bama; how could they realize if Tarama did not tell them? That Bamacharan who was holding the feet of "Bama" (Tarama), who was incarnation of Shiva and was residing in His own form – this is beyond the grasping knowledge of common people. After leaving the physical body, he was then in the state of Shivahood elevating him from the condition of bounded soul (jivahood). As a result, physical body could not carry the burden of Shivahood and became senseless; the final destination of jivahood is infinite Shivahood, which is the highest level. There, soul of jiva remains immersed in Supreme Soul. Consequently, there is an initiation into trance.

Incarnation of Shiva Bamacharan came to the world to teach that Brahman manifests as jiva, and jiva also ultimately becomes Brahman. Then, it is quite possible for jiva to become again Shiva or Brahman; because, the attributes of Shiva or Brahman are also hidden in jiva. Thus, Purna-Brahman (Absolute God) Shiva was incarnated as Bamacharan in human form to spread the philosophy of Brahman or Tara, to teach this eternal knowledge, and also to liberate jivas. Right from birth, during babyhood, childhood, and boyhood, Bamacharan demonstrated again and again the idea of his absoluteness in his extraordinary acts and talks. However, almost every contemporary person could not understand the true meaning and correct significance of his divine acts and talks.

Not just common people, even great sadhakas visiting Tarapith did not realize the real nature of Bamacharan. Anyway, after sometime, Bamacharan came into senses and got up from lying position. As a result, spectators uttered huzza with great delight. Sarvananda became very happy and returned back to home with two dearest sons. After hearing all events, Rajkumari Devi thought that there might be possession of some god or goddess on Bama. Consequently, she was quite worried and prayed to Tarama for the overall welfare of her son; certainly, Bamacharan laughed in the back about worrying mother.

Sarvananda was continuing to perform musical plays and open-air operas; sometimes, he performed the "*Ramayana*"; in this play, he used to make Bamacharan as Lord Ramachandra and youngest son Ram as Lakshmana. Bam used to enjoy the acting of Krishna, Balarama, and Ramachandra. Also, the songs were very much up to his liking; but child Ram did not like these acts; he wanted to stay in Atla village.

Somehow, Sarvananda was trying to run the family with the small income from the plays. Meanwhile, one by one; Jaykali, Durga, Dravamayi, and Sundari were married. Dedicated to Tarama, Sarvananda had accepted the pain, pleasure, want, and sufferings of household life as easy as Sun and Moon. Thus, he was conducting his duty without any attachment accepting poverty as a friend. But, it is impossible to understand the lila of Tarama; heavier sufferings are destined for dearer children. Thus, She did not allow Sarvananda also to remain trouble-free for a long time.

Eldest daughter Jaykali became a child-widow and returned to Sarvananda's house; like father, Jaykali also was keeping herself completely dedicated in Tara sadhana. After Jaykali, youngest daughter Sundari also returned from husband's house a little after marriage. Spirited Sarvananda got her nine year old daughter Sundari married for second time according to prescription of scriptures. As a result, a conflict started between orthodox Hindu society and Sarvananda. Consequently, neighbors condemned Sarvananda and made him an out-cast. However, neglecting these obstacles, Sarvananda dedicated himself in the flow of Shyama-Sangits.

3.14 Sacred Thread Ceremony

Most of the time Sarvananda used to spend time at the village Kali temple; sometimes he would sing, sometimes he would play the violin; unfortunately, villagers could not understand this artist and self-absorbed worshipper of Tarama.

Meanwhile, Bamacharan had just become 17 years old. Then, he was a tall, healthy, strong, and medium complexioned young man. His two big eyes used to be always tearful and reddish in the name of Tarama; and his facial grace was sacred and beautiful just like five year child.

Rajkumari Devi was often reminding her husband for sacred thread ceremony of Bamacharan; she argued that it was already late for a Brahmin boy; for further delay there would be severe expiation. Therefore, there should not be any more delay. Sarvananda knew all these facts, but due to monetary problem he could not arrange thread ceremony of Bamacharan. In fact, like Rajkumari Devi he was also suffering from mental agony.

Bamacharan had already crossed the usual upper limit of age set for sacred thread ceremony of Brahmin boy. Thus, without any further delay, according to his means, in approximately Bengali calendar year 1261 (1854 AD), Sarvananda performed thread ceremony of Bamacharan. After thread ceremony, there was a big change in Bamacharan; quite often, he used to go to village Kali temple and would sit for hours in silent mood; sometimes, he used to lose his sacred thread and Sarvananda had to find it and purify it for use.

3.15 Loss of Father

Shortly after sacred thread ceremony, in the Bengali month of Kartik (October – November), Sarvananda performed Kali puja with the idol moulded by himself; both Bam and Ram offered prayer (anjali) to Tarama at his instruction. Then, he sang sweet Shyama-Sangits. After sometime, he became sick with a deadly disease; he suffered for a while. Then, on one evening of Bengali calendar year 1262 (1855 AD), with full sense, chanting sweet name of Tarama, "Kali Kali Tara Tara", he left with great pleasure the mortal body to unite with the Lotus Feet of Tarama. Eldest son Bam and other relatives brought him to the maha-shmashana of Tarapith. Then, they cremated his physical body near Shimultala. Thus, dedicated son of Tarama was put under rest forever in the lapse of Tarama.

Wife Rajkumari Devi became overwhelmed with the burning fire of grief; she was just 36 years old when she lost her dearest husband. Even in this great personal disaster, she undertook all responsibilities of family on her shoulder. In spite of her own endless grief, her primary objective was to bring up children.

3.16 Ecstasy on Tara

After death of Sarvananda there was tremendous change in Bamacharan; all the time he was in a state of deep thinking mood for something unknown; even, daily routine activities like food and rest were not maintained. What is death? Where does a human being go after death? Why does a human being return to the world and then goes back again? – These kinds of philosophical thoughts were always present in his mind.

Finally, he came to the conclusion that answers to all these questions could definitely be known through Tarama. Young Bama remembered that one day it was his father Sarvananda who introduced him to Tarama. His father was always in ecstatic state thinking only about Tara. Therefore, Bama also totally surrendered with all his heart and soul to his dearest father's Ishtadevi Tarama. Consequently, Tarama occupied all his thoughts and feelings. Terrible pain from loss of father and acute poverty – nothing could distract him from Tarama.

Slowly, Bamacharan was recovered from the grief of father's death and remained all the time in happy mood by drinking the sweet nectar in the name of Tarama. Consequently, he was becoming totally indifferent to worldly interests like family, society, formalities, and politeness etc. His deep love and sincerity for Tarama were so intense that even his own mother Rajkumari Devi was surprised. She tried to make him conscious about the severe poverty of the family and his responsibility as an eldest son; although for a while he could feel the poor family condition but as if an invisible power would take control and make him forget this attachment to family. As usual, Bama remained indifferent to family condition.

Sometimes Bamacharan would sit quietly in Kali temple.

Other times, he would talk alone to Tarama while walking in his own mind in the bank of the Chile River. Occasionally, he would pick up a marmelos leaf or a flower from the road, and while explaining the color of flower he would throw this towards sky with mantra, *"Tarama phat svaha"* – "Tarama, my offering to you"; sometime he would visit Tarapith and talking to himself would offer flower to Tarama by saying, "Tarama, accept"; at times, he might visit also maha-shmashana of Tarapith. Now and then, like an absent-minded person, he would go to the Mundamalini (Kali) temple; from that temple he would visit the Dharmaraj temple traveling via Saralpur; from the Dharmaraj temple he might go to the Dakshinakali of Udaypur. These visits to different spots might be the inspection of young Bama in disguise for his future empire. In fact, in subsequent time, for a long period of fifty years, he visited many times aforesaid temples.

However, Rajkumari Devi constantly alerted her crazy son who was sanctified and innocent like a baby about financial want and troubles of the family. Also, she reminded him all the time about his younger brothers and sisters. Consequently, Bama had some temporary thoughts for income; in fact, he assured his mother that he would make some arrangement. However, all these thoughts and assurance about income were very much short lived; the super magic influence of name of Tarama would make him forget all his household duties. As a result, he was in complete union with Tarama all the time.

Whenever supreme love of God is bestowed on dearest devotee, then in the spiritual world he would be always remain in blissful and powerful condition, but at the same time, in the physical world he would be very weak and helpless. Consequently, in whatever areas of worldly life he would engage, everywhere he would be failure and as a result would feel grief, insult, and terrible suffering from poverty; indeed, this is an amazing situation.

Tarama also put Bamacharan in this unique condition. An invisible supreme power left Bamacharan in the unspeakable poverty but on another side started playing colorful games with him. This endlessly blissful Tarama became his body, mind, soul, feeling, and expression – in one word everything. Accordingly, as mother Rajkumari Devi sometimes called Bama for food or household work, likewise Tarama also called him on regular basis. Engrossed with the thoughts of Tarama all the time, Bama could feel that Brahma-Shila of Tarapith herself appeared before him in the human form of super blissful Mother. Consequently, with great pleasure, while talking to Tarama he would run towards Tarapith. But for the common people with no understanding of spiritual matter, this was just an incident of stupid or "howhre" running alone towards Tarapith. Without the grace of Tarama, it is not possible to understand this divine feeling of Bamacharan. With his movement in the subtle world all the time, not only he would talk to Tarama but also he could talk to other forms of Tarama i.e. different gods and goddesses. In fact, these gods and goddesses also would converse with him. As a result, a mysterious chapter of lila was commenced.

3.17 Lifting of Idols

There were many household gods and goddesses in different houses of Atla village. Whenever Bama would walk on the village road, frequently these gods and goddesses would call him to talk and would ask for water to drink. Completely absorbed in thoughts of Tarama, Bama could see their thirsty form through his subtle eyes. Quite often, soft-hearted Bama while remaining invisible would lift them and would hide them in water of the Chile River for a long time; after sometime, he would put them back in their respective houses where they belonged; usually, he would lift them in night and returned them back before dawn. Sometimes, with great pleasure he would worship them in open land or in the bank of river, and afterwards would take them back to proper place.

Sometimes, Bama in ecstatic condition for Tarama might even forget to return these household gods and goddesses. As a result, these household idols would have been left behind outside the houses. Consequently, there would be great investigation by householders to find their idols. Anyway, idols left on the field or bottom of the Tree could be recovered, but what about idols hidden under river water who would have been in full stomach with overwhelmed state due to large water consumption. Finally, Bama had to come forward to reveal the hiding place. Some householder might ask, "Bama, why did you lift the idols?" In response, ever truthful Bama would say, "Idols were asking for drinking water from me. Therefore, I had to lift them at night and would sink them under the Chile River water." Common villagers had no such insight power to understand the significance of these divine feeling and truthful disclosure; naturally, they could not believe and gave Bama a disgraceful name "idol lifter". So long, Bama was crowned with titles like "howhre", "chova", "khyapa" etc.; now, another title of "idol lifter" was added to it.

Gradually, this act of lifting the idols was disclosed to all villagers; so, whenever there was any incident of lifting of idle, everybody blamed Bama and Bama also without any excitement would return idols. To Bama, reward and reproach – both are same. Also to him, only Tarama is eternal, everything else is temporary. Therefore, he would not care to find out who would praise and who would blame.

Anyway, Bama became famous in the village as idol lifter. One day, over a similar incident of idol lifting, villagers went to Durgadas Sarkar who was a close friend of Bama's father Sarvananda, and complained against Bama. Durgadas Sarkar was a neighbor of Sarvananda and was also a well wisher of the Sarvananda's family. Besides, Bama was very affectionate to him. However, based on complaints, he reprimanded Bama. Bama used to call father's friend Durgadas Sarkar as "Sarkar uncle". Bama said, "Sarkar uncle, what shall I do? Idols shout for drinking water; that is why I take them to Chile River for quenching their thirst." Then, following order of Sarkar uncle, he disclosed the locations where idols were submerged under Chile River water. Consequently, villagers recovered their respective idols, and as a reward gave Bama a thrashing. Bama was always in deep ecstatic mood for Tarama; so, he had no sense of physical body. Thus, as a reward for his talking to household gods and goddesses and serving them with drinking water, Bama received blame and beating from the village people; even then, Bama remained cool and quiet; everything to him was play of Tarama. Subsequently, Bama started another lila.

3.18 Grazing of Cows

The Chile River flows from north to west side of Atla village. This river ends at the Dvaraka River. At the bank of this Chile River, Bamacharan started his colorful act of grazing cows. Baidyanath Chattopadhyay was his childhood friend. Baidyanath was a resident of Kanaipur village under the jurisdiction of Murari police station. He came to reside in his maternal uncle's house at Kharun. Baidyanath together with Nitai Mandal and other village boys organized a group to graze cows by the bank of the Chile River. Bamacharan also joined with this group. In addition, he was trying to help mother in household works. During this act of grazing cows by Bamacharan, his associate boys were astonished by witnessing an extraordinary event.

As soon as there would be a ring from bell of the nearby Taratemple calling for prasad (food becomes prasad after the conclusion of puja), Bamacharan would jump on the Chile River while making a sound of "Jay Tara". Then, after crossing the river, used to go straight to Taratemple. Subsequently, after eating prasad, he would come back with great pleasure to graze again along with village boys; as long as Bamacharan was engaged in performing this act of grazing crows, this was his daily routine.

Occasionally, Bamacharan would visit Tarapith to view Tarama. He had an endless infallible attraction for Tarapith and Tarama. From this time on, he was very eager to stay permanently in Tarapith. During this divine period of extreme eagerness, he was fortunate enough to receive rare audience of Tarama for two or three occasions. Returning to home after these audiences, he would feel very sad for Tarama. Consequently, he would cry silently for the separation from the Universal Mother Tara (this was disclosed by Bamacharan to his devotees while describing his mental condition during this time).

3.19 Strong Friendship and Amazing Puja

One of the village gods, Dharmathakur, resides at Beltala (place under the marmelos tree) by the bank of Chile River on the northern side of Atla village. Sarvananda used to offer regularly fruit and flower to the broken idol of this Dhrmaraj. Along with father, Bam also visited this place a few times. Bamacharan would clean this broken idol for a long time and then he would worship with great sincerity.

At times, sitting in this Beltala he would become ecstatic on his dearest Tarama. In one afternoon of such day, while sitting in Beltala, Bamacharan developed a strong desire to smoke ganja (marijuana). When Tarama Herself is willing to fulfill somebody's desire, then his aspiration could not be left unaccomplished. Just at the time when Bam was thinking about smoking ganja, Thakurdas Bhandari of Atla village arrived at Beltala. Thakurdas also was very addicted to smoking ganja. As a result, from that day, a strong friendship was developed for ever between Bamacharan and Thakurdas.

One day, Bamacharan and Thakurdas decided to bring village idols including Lord Shiva to Beltala for worshipping together with Dharmaraj; as he thought, so he acted. Meanwhile, as a result of disappearance of so many village idols, there was a big excitement in the village; as usual, villagers came to Bam at the Beltala. But then, Bamacharan was single-mindedly performing puja. Villagers were astonished by witnessing his divine utterance of mantra and sincere puja. At the end of puja, with great pleasure, villagers identified and received their own idols. One villager asked Bam, "Khyapathakur, why did you bring the idols here?" Bamacharan replied," Your idols were crying for drinking water; that is why, I have brought them here and pacified them by offering flower and water; now you can take them back." Mesmerized villagers listened to Bamacharan and quietly left the place with idols. This is the first time Bamacharan received a reward of respectful name "khyapathakur" instead of reprimand.

3.20 At Kali Temple of Maluti

Meanwhile, financial condition of family was becoming terrible. In spite of her best effort, Rajkumari Devi was losing control to manage the household affairs. But she had to arrange daily food for her children. Consequently, poverty like violent summer noon was throwing terrible hot rays of want on the family of Rajkumari Devi. Bamacharan was her only hope for help, but although Bam became adult still he had no attachment to the worldly affairs.

Sometimes by showing affection, at times by complaining, and now and then even by reprimanding, Rajkumari Devi was trying to attract Bam towards household acts. At times, loosing patience over poverty and hearing complain against Bam from the villagers, she would slap her ecstatic on Tara son Bam. The living symbol of endless patience and endurance Bamacharan would receive that punishment with calmness. He knew how much his mother was suffering from the terrible financial trouble of the family.

Bam would inform Tarama again and again about the endless misery of distressed widow mother and younger brother and sisters. But it appeared as if Tarama was indifferent. However, Tarama was really not indifferent. Family friend Durgadas Sarkar came forward to arrange a job for Bama. Durgadas Sarkar was an employee of Natore kingdom. He was care taker of servicing and puja of Tarama. He had lot of connection with influential people; hence, he could arrange a job for Bama in Kalitemple of Maluti near Atla village; Bama also accepted this job arranged by his father's friend Sarkar uncle.

This Kalitemple was known to be built by landlord of Nayander. Duties of Bam for this job were to cook food-offering for

Kalima and to pick flowers for puja. But quite often, while cooking he would remain in bewildered state in the name of Tarama. Consequently, food-offering would be burnt; under compulsion, priest of the temple assigned the work of picking up flowers. However, same situation was repeated in flower picking work. While picking up flowers, he would see the grand puja of limitless Tarama in every corner of the world – in sky, air, cloud, river, tree, fruit, flower, etc. Endless inner mind of Bama would become one by integrating with this external grand nature. Thus, just to pick flower separately for a small Kali idol of Kalitemple could not be possible for Bama.

However, for common people it is impossible to understand this divine feeling of Bama. Therefore, gradually priest would becoming angry; food-offering could not be ready in time; if at all it was ready, most of the time that would be in burnt condition. Also, flowers for puja could not be available when required. While searching for Bama, priest would notice that Bam would stand still looking at the flower plants. Priest would reprimand him, but knowing the poor family condition he would tolerate this for sometime. Finally, he became totally disappointed with the acts of Bama. Consequently, he complained to the temple authorities; after witnessing with their own eyes, authorities dismissed Bama from the job. There is another story about this incident of job dismissal – Bam became disgusted with the lifeless puja of the priest. Then he informed authorities about this, left the job and returned to Atla village.

Anyway, Bam was relieved from the burden of job. When Bama was forced to follow the prescribed duty of the job, his condition was similar to a free bird of the forest captivated inside a cage. He had to surrender to the cruel routine work for a meager income. Thus, immediately after becoming free from the bondage, he rushed to his dearest Tarama and described his experience to Her. It was also a great pleasure for Tarama to receive Her dearest son Bama. Subsequently, Bama returned to Atla village and informed about the dismissal of job to mother Rajkumari Devi. Obviously, she became very unhappy but after a few days she tried to pacify Bam and asked him to look for another job.

3.21 Amazing Service and Beating

Rajkumari Devi realized that there was no possibility of Bama's employment anywhere else. Besides, Bama had no interest in looking for a job. After long and careful thinking, she came to the conclusion that if cultivation could be performed in whatever small agricultural land was available, it might provide at least minimum income for basic food. Sarveshvar Let was very trustworthy and was old helping hand since the living days of her late husband Sarvananda. She decided to appoint Sarveshvar as a share-cropper with the condition that Sarveshvar would give the major share to Rajkumari Devi and balance would be left for him. Thus, she told Bama to carry everyday in the morning and afternoon rice krispie and brown sugar to agricultural field for Sarveshvar. Consequently, this could be considered as some job for Bama. Also, she thought that through this daily activity of walking to field, Bama might be attracted to cultivation. Perhaps, Tarama would laugh by knowing this desire of Rajkumari Devi.

Anyway, Bama agreed to this proposal of mother. He thought that just by carrying twice daily rice krispie and brown sugar, all household problems will be resolved. But unfortunately, even this small task of carrying rice krispie and brown sugar to field could not be properly performed by Bama; quite often, Bama in ecstatic condition would serve the beggars or dogs or forest birds with this rice krispie and brown sugar. As a result, many times Sarveshvar had to work in the field without any food. Accordingly, he would often complain to Rajkumari Devi against Bama. In fact, sometimes, he would become angry and beat Bama with a cane. But Bama remained stupid (howhre) as before.

In subsequent years, in this context of beating, Bamakhyapa told in a laughing mood to his devotees, "I was a bit stupid, and as a result of this, often, Sarveshvarda (respected as elder brother) had to remain without food. Consequently, with great affection, Sarveshvarda used to beat me with truncheon for driving cattle." Not only from Sarveshvarda, Bamakhyapa received beating also from his own parents, maternal uncle, neighbor Durgadas Sarkar, villagers, Ishan Bhattacharya, pandas of Tarapith, and others. It is not known in the history of Indian Sadhana that somebody was beaten so much like Bama before and after attainment of siddhi. But, behind every beating, his best intention of providing service was present. This was also a play of Tarama. As a reward of endless love for and selfless act of service to the people and gods and goddesses, time and again he had to receive beating. In spite of this, he always maintained his full respect and love for all from whom he received insult and physical torture. The following story is an example of this extraordinary trait:

Once, while Durgadas Sarkar went to Tarapith, Bam thought that he should do some service to the household idols of Sarkar uncle as a respect for his regular service to Tarama and also for his benevolence to Bama's family. Accordingly, he gathered all household idols of Durgadas Sarkar at the foot of a tree in the maha-shmashana of Tarapith and worshipped them with water, fruit, and sweet; in the mean time, there was excitement in the village due to lifting of idols. However, Durgadas Sarkar staying in Tarapith could correctly understand that this was an act of Bam. On his way to search for Bam, Durgadas Sarkar arrived at maha-shmashana and found Bam with idols; immediately, angry Durgadas without listening to any word from Bam started caning Bam severely. As a result of this awful beating, Bam's blood-smeared body dropped on the ground; from that day onward, Bam gave up this lifting of household idols for worshipping. On another occasion, without any valid reason, priest of Tarapith Ishan Bhattacharya hit his head with a kosha (canoe shaped water container used for worshipping) and consequently there was a lot of bloodshed. However, Bam just silently took the beating without any resistance. Similarly, Bam was terribly beaten in his maternal uncle's house. Also, pandas of Tarapith tortured him many times out of greed and anger. But throughout his life Bam tolerated these awful tortures and forgave those who committed these acts. Bam was physically and mentally a very strong person. Therefore, if he wanted, he could stop these tortures in a second; but instead, not once but every time, he showed endless restraint and control. He was an incarnation of Lord Shiva, symbol of perfection; so, he demonstrated to us (imperfect beings) how anger has to be controlled with love; he proved that patience is virtue and endurance is power.

Bam was very devoted and respectful to his parents; although he received beating from them sometimes, he immediately removed any bad feeling out of these incidents from his mind. In this context, in subsequent Bengali calendar year of 1317 (1910 AD), he told Tantra-aspirant Pramod Kumar Chattopadhyay, "Right from childhood, I obeyed whatever parents had asked. When father said that you should sing in yatra, immediately I followed his order. When father asked me not to perform some act, I did give up performing that act. Do you think that I did not receive beating from father? I received beating from father in childhood; received beating also from mother. But it does not matter, if you commit wrong doing, should not they beat?"

In the life of Bamakhyapa, this grand ideal of village people in the nineteenth century Bengal or India was perfectly reflected. Firm devotion to parents, great respect for elderly people, deep love for younger kids, friendliness to coevals, compassion for neighbors, and even respectful behavior towards household servants – all of these ideals were fully followed by Bam. In this present century, one can not even dream of these extraordinary ideals. Thus, parents are afraid of even talking in tough language with their young children; forget about beating; because young son might hit them back. Also, at the present time, beating by some elderly villager or by elder household servant is unthinkable; showing respect to elder servant like elder brother is rare.

Sri Bamakhyapa with his endless patience, immense love, and outstanding nobility set a remarkable example to remind that golden tradition of Indian village life. His glorious activities proved beyond any doubt that he was in one - ideal son, ideal disciple, and ideal guru. Consequently, he will be remembered for ever as yuga Avatara.

3.22 In the House of Maternal Uncle

Rajkumari Devi found that her eldest son Bam could not even carry rice krispie and brown sugar for Sarveshvar. She realized without any doubt that Bam was not fit for any activity related to maintenance of family and worldly life. However, Bam was then a full grown young man; nonetheless, her main worries then was how to engage her baby-like innocent son in some job. But it was a very difficult task; finally, she decided to send Bam and Ram for a while to her father's house at Nabagram village under Sainthia. Accordingly, she sent message to her younger brother Hemchandra. Rajkumari Devi thought that sons will have good time in maternal uncle's house. In addition, Bam might get some job and also could study under uncle. Consequently, after long time, she was feeling better with prospect of future happiness. But Bam was not happy with this decision. He did not like the idea of going to uncle's house by leaving mother, Tarama, and Kali temple of Atla village; nonetheless, following mother's order, he had to go. Younger brother Hemchandra assured Rajkumari Devi about the welfare of two nephews and took them to Nabagram.

Hemchandra promised to provide temporary support of providing food and shelter for his two nephews; but, in reality, he did just the opposite. Hemchandra was very much attached to worldly affairs; moreover, he was uxorious, a person without his own personality; word of his wife would be final to him and he would follow this without any question. Consequently, like other uxorious men without personality, he lost the sense of differentiating between right and wrong.

Wife of Hemchandra became very annoyed by arrival of Bam and Ram; she would be very happy to send off these two unwanted guests; but Hemchandra explained that help was definitely required to take care of his many cows. In lieu of other servants, his two nephews could be engaged in serving the cows; this would save money, he had to just feed them twice daily.

Bam and Ram found out very soon that their imagination of love and affection in maternal uncle's home as told by mother Rajkumari Devi was quite opposite in real life. They had to work very hard in day and night. In addition, Bam and Ram were totally distressed due to rebuke and scolding by maternal aunt and also by her old aunt. In spite of this pathetic condition, with enormous patience, Bam somehow continued to work but this inhuman brutality was too much for boy Ram. In Atla, there was poverty but there were at least piece and pleasure; moreover, there were not so much insult, torture, and hard work.

However, Bam was trying very hard to please uncle and aunt; Ram also was helping in household works. In spite of their great efforts, maternal aunt treated them with rebuke. Sometimes uncle also joined with aunt in rebuke and to please his wife he used to beat them. This kind of behavior is quite expected from a person like uncle who was uxorious and man without personality. Anyway, while sleeping on a worn-out bed at night, Bam tried to console his younger brother. It was almost impossible for boy Ram to continue with this brutality; in tearful eyes he would say to Bam, "Brother, let us go back to mother. I can not stay here anymore. I can not bear this beating everyday." Looking at the grim face of brother, Bam also could not control tears. To Bam, mother Rajkumari Devi was Tarama in another form; so he would remember both mothers – Rajkumari Devi and Tarama.

Bam would spend sleepless night in meditation of Tarama. While grazing the cows in the field, Bam would look in the vast sky and would completely absorb in the infinite form of Tarama. As a result, uncle's cows would enter into other's agricultural field and would eat plants and crops. Consequently, villagers would complain and Bam had to receive beating from his uncle. However, Bam used to tolerate these sufferings silently. Sometimes, in meditative mood on Tara, he would hurt his finger during cutting hay for feeding cows. As a result, besides blood shed, he would be rewarded with rebuke from aunt and beating from uncle. Unfortunately, his uncle and aunt had absolutely no ability to understand the divine status of Bam; so these worldly creatures continued to increase the degree of torture on Bam and Ram. Hemchandra could not behave in this manner if their father Sarvananda would be alive. Spirited and free from greed Brahmin Sarvananda did not keep a cordial relation with the rich in-laws. In the absence of father, his children could understand why Sarvananda did not take any monetary help from in-laws.

Meanwhile, in addition to increasing physical torture on Bam, food supply to him was also continuously reduced. The situation became critical when one day uxorious Hemchandra, based on allegation from wife, completely lost his humanity and mercilessly beat Bam. His food was also curtailed. In the night, Bam was left on the floor with body smeared with blood condition and without any food. On other side, his uncle and aunt had their usual supper and went on sleep. In spite of these terrible sufferings, Bam did not report anything to his distressed mother Rajkumari Devi. But Tarama who knows all could not tolerate anymore. Neighbors of Hemchandra informed Rajkumari Devi about the inhuman torture of her children. Affectionate mother went immediately to his brother's house and saw everything in her own eyes. She was very much upset by seeing the lean and tortured Bam and Ram. However, controlling her emotion, she talked to her brother and returned to Atla with Bam and Ram.

Approximately in the Bengali calendar year of 1264 (1857 AD), Bam and Ram returned from maternal uncle's house to Atla.

Then, Bam was twenty years and Ram was seven years old. Horrible memory of their experience in maternal uncle's house was imprinted on their minds, particularly for Bam, like a bad dream.

In this respect, there is hearsay that Bam and Ram were tortured so much that a time had come when they could not take it any more. First, boy Ram left uncle's home and went to Khesarmarh village to learn singing. Bam was alone for sometime in uncle's house, and afterwards he also returned to his mother at Atla village. Ram was continuing to learn singing in Khesarmarh village. But this hearsay is not reliable and authentic; in Bengali calendar year 1264 (1857 AD), Ram was only seven years old. For someone of that age, it was not possible to leave uncle's house and go to a distant village to learn singing. Besides, retuning of Bam alone to Atla village without taking his younger brother Ram is also unrealistic and unlikely. Therefore, this hearsay can not be accepted as authentic.

3.23 Bam in Fire

After returning to Atla, Bam became more attached to Tarama. Such a terrible picture of awful selfishness and cruelty of domestic life was shown to him by Tarama, that Bam lost any interest to earthly pleasure or happiness of family man. Giving up this illusion of temporary and worthless worldly life, he surrendered at the Lotus Feet of eternal Tarama.

Quite often, he used to go Tarapith to visit Tarama and to meet with the pious men and ascetics; particularly, he was very fond of Vrajavasi Kailaspati and Mokshadananda, chief Kaula of Tarapith. Bam met Vrajavasi Kailaspati for the first time in the house of Durgadas Sarkar. Vrajavasi also in his first meeting liked this strong, pure, and spirited young man. He realized that in future this godly young man would become a great saint. Apart from Vrajavasi Kailaspati, Bam made acquaintance with many distinguished pious men and ascetics. They also liked Bam and frequently enjoyed with him smoking of ganja and drinking of alcohol. However, it was of no importance for ever blissful Bam; to him everything was Tarama. Thus, he was always in blissful condition because true nature of Brahman is bliss. World is created from bliss, is maintained in bliss, and is also dissolved in bliss. Therefore, the one who is like Brahman, he would be always in natural blissful state.

Inside nature or outside nature – everything was Tarama to Bam; so, virtue or sin, pleasure or distress, and edible or inedible – everything was Tarama. Bam knew that whatever happened was done under the direction of Tarama. To Bam, Tarama was only truth and eternal, everything else was unreal and temporary; so, he was ever blissful in the thoughts of Tarama. When this feeling of Tarama would be very deep, he would even forget both truth and untruth, and would live in the super state of Brahman. In this super state, he would visualize that every part of the great universe dissolves in one and only one Tarama. In fact, in this universal Brahman stage, any saint would die within 21 days; but, Bam was living in this super stage of Brahman months after months without any problem; this was so natural to him. In the Indian history of sadhana, this kind of living in Brahman stage for long time is rare. Also, even before attainment of traditional siddhi, there is no incidence of somebody living in this super Brahman stage at all time; in this respect, Bam did set up an unprecedented example.

Even with engrossment in super Brahman stage, Bam performed innumerable divine activities throughout his life. In reality, Bam's performance was Bama's (Tarama's) performance. Tarama resides in the grand flame of fire as described in Tantra. Entering in that fire, Bam also remained unburned. Following story is the glorious example of this fact.

Once, while smoking ganja in village, Bam and his friend Thakurdas Bhandari were discussing about Tarama. Bam threw on his side fire from ganja chillum without noticing stacks of hay. As a result, dry hay was ignited. Villagers were afraid of this fire, because if it would spread, most of the village houses which were made of hay would be destroyed. Villagers assembled fire fighting staffs like water and sand, and found Bam and Thakurdas sitting beside the fire. They became so angry at the incident that they even tried to throw both in fire; somehow, Thakurdas escaped, but they got Bam. However, Bam was so strong that even eight to ten villagers could not control him. At this moment Bam thought that why villagers would throw him in fire, instead, why not throw himself in fire? This feeling of Mahavir (Hanuman, the symbol of a pure devotee of God Ramachandra. According to the epic *Ramayana*, he destroyed a large part of Lanka with fire attached to his tail) was granted to his mind by Tarama.

Bam standing over a nearby wall jumped into flame of fire saying "Jay Tara" (Glory to Tara). Just at that moment, Tarama took him out of fire and said, "Bam, flee". Although Bam was in fire, his divine body was untouched and Bam went straight to Tarapith. Meanwhile, villagers thought that Bam might be dead due to fire. They were very sad and also nervous because Bam was a Brahmin, and Brahmins usually perform priesthood job; and any harm to a Brahmin might bring bad effects in village. Also, Bam was quite dear to villagers. With heartfelt lamentation, villagers approached the place of extinguished fire and were astonished to find that there was no trace of Bam's body.

After hearing the news of fire and possible death of Bam, Rajkumari Devi became almost mad with grief. However, delighted Bam returned to village and described what happened. Villagers, for the first time, could realize that there was definitely countless grace of Tarama on Bam. Rajkumari Devi told Bam not to play with fire because it could create great distress to public. In response, Bam replied,

"Mother, Tarama granted me the feeling of Hanuman. Son of Tarama could not be burnt in fire." Henceforth, in case of any incident of fire, villagers used to blame Bam. Once, Bam was even arrested by police on this charge of arson. But, police inspector was charmed with his truthfulness and innocence, and after feeding him with some fruit and sweet, released him without any punishment. Due to this happy incident Bam had lot of respect for police. He would become peaceful if anybody uttered to him the name of police. In subsequent years, many humorous incidents of Bam happened around police.

After this incident of fire, Bam was spending most of his time at the lapse of Tarama in Tarapith.

3.24 Hints Through Song

Since sometime, along with pious men Bam had become a regular user of siddhi (bhang), ganja, and alcohol. It was a great pleasure for him to offer these intoxicating drugs to Tarama. His pleasure would be magnified with addition of rice krispie and parched rice.

Bam would receive rice krispie and parched rice from the devotees coming to Tarapith for offering puja to Tarama. Then, after drinking alcohol along with rice krispie or parched rice as snack, he would sing in engrossed mind with thoughts of Tarama:

"Oh mind! Walk
To Bhola uncle's shop.
On head of madman and on feet of madwoman
Whoever offers alcohol,
Flippant drunkard can not reach there."

Note: Bhola uncle's shop – Near God Shiva.

Madman – God Shiva

Madwoman – Goddess Durga.

Offers alcohol – Most sincere offering with purest mind from a spiritual aspirant.

Flippant drunkard – Common alcoholic who drinks just for earthly pleasure.

General public could not understand the hidden meaning of this song. They considered Bam as "khyapa" or insane man. Thus, behavior of Bam was appeared to be irregular and uncommon. But what kind of madman was Bam — that could be realized only by high level pious men. These men have been performing sadhana for ages to be one like Bam.

Bam disclosed a very secret concept of Tantra through the abovementioned song. Bam provided a hint of deep significance of sadhana for the sadhakas of Ardha-Narishvara (a deity the right half of whose body is that of God Shiva whilst the left half is that of Goddess Durga.) However, this can be understood only by competent persons.

Even with unnatural and limitless consumption of alcohol, Bam would not be drunk; instead, he would be completely tuned up with thoughts of Mother and would act perfectly in correct steps along with Tarama. Thus, Bam was not drunk in ordinary sense but fully in conscious state as an inseparable devotee.

3.25 In Tarapith

Meanwhile, Rajkumari Devi realized that Bam became completely disinterested about worldly affairs. Therefore, she was trying to make him conscious about the responsibility of an eldest son. Bam was the eldest son and it is the usual practice in Indian life that in absence of father the eldest son undertakes the responsibility of household affairs. However, Bam was helpless; everything in his life was dedicated to Tarama. Bam did not understand why his Tarama could not help him to maintain household duties in peace. He wandered for the whole day with this thought in mind and in the evening with grief and tired body went on sleep under a tree.

In the sleep, Bam had this dream – Tarama said to him, "Bam, come to my place. You should not wary. I will take care of everything. It will be good for you." As soon as he waked up from sleep, he started walking towards Tarapith. Now he decided to stay permanently in Tarapith close to his dearest Tarama. He would take prasad in day time and for dinner he would manage with rice krispie and brown sugar. For sleeping in night, there was no fixed place – sometimes could be inside temple of Tarama and some other times might be in landing-stage (ghata) of Jivitakunda.

Initially, Bam would occasionally go to Atla village to visit his mother and younger brothers and sisters; gradually, he reduced the frequency of this visit. Once, he did not go to Atla village for a long time; naturally, his mother Rajkumari Devi became very worried about the welfare of his dearest son; at last, she decided to go to Tarapith to find the condition of Bam. In the night, Rajkumari Devi saw in dream that Tarama told her, "Do not worry for Bama. He is secure in my lap." Because of this divine dream, Rajkumari Devi became unperturbed and at the same time realized that Bam did not arrive in this world to perform normal household duties; instead, Tarama had arranged much larger and significant area of work for him. Accordingly, Tarama did not allow Bam to work in solving the economic problem of her family. When Rajkumari Devi was finally convinced that Bam arrived to work for Tarama, she gave up all worries about Bam and dedicated him forever at the Lotus Feet of Tarama. From that time onwards, Bam made Tarapith as his permanent place of residence.

3.26 Amazing Postman

Bam was staying in Tarapith in great mental peace. But since Bam was not an ascetic, according to instruction of Natore estate he was not entitled to receive free prasad of Tarama. Therefore, privilege of free prasad for Bam was about to be discontinued.

Bam had all the qualities of an ascetic. In fact, he was siddha from birth. Therefore, he did not really require anything extra to make him an ascetic. Ascetic (sannasi) means who has completely given up the desire of possessing anything. Consequently, to a sannasi there is no difference between gold and faeces. Both woman and gold (kamini and kanchan) are equally forbidden to a real ascetic. Even if, the idol made of clay is shaped like a woman, ascetic will not even look at it; in this respect, Bam was truly an ideal ascetic. But as Bam had no traditional saffron colored robe of ascetics, he was not respected by common people. Unfortunately, general public always follows the wrong ideology – "first is attractive appearance then consider character." Thus, in spite of having all the qualities of a great ascetic, Bam was deprived of receiving free prasad of Tarama.

This made ever well-wisher and helpful Durgadas Sarkar very worried for Bam. Before he arranged job for Bam at Maluti's Kali temple; nevertheless, he arranged again another job for Bam. This time, the job was to deliver letters of Natore estate to its different offices situated in various villages. As remuneration, Bam would receive daily prasad of Tarama, and five rupees cash per month. Durgadas Sarkar made arrangement so that these five rupees would be sent directly to Bam's mother Rajkumari Devi.

Bam accepted this job as it was quite easy, just to deliver letters. Basically, this was job of a peon. However, the benefits of this job was quite attractive – free boarding at Tarapith and prasad of Tarama, plus his mother would receive five rupees per month. Therefore, Bam had no hesitation to welcome this offer of employment with pleasure. In the spiritual history of India, friction between spiritual aspiration and worldly wealth is known forever. Many high level sadhakas had to work like ordinary people to meet the demand of worldly affairs. For example, Avatara Sri Sri Chaitanyadev had to work for sometime as a low paid teacher in a Sanskrit school; great shakta sadhak Sri Ramprasad worked as a clerk for thirty rupees salary per month; Avatara Sri Sri Ramkrishna performed job of an ordinary priest at Bhavataraini Temple in Dakshineshvar for only three and half rupees per month. Therefore, job of a peon for five rupees per month was not bad. Also, this would help mother Rajkumari Devi to maintain household affairs – this was a great satisfaction for Bam.

Bam started to make delivery of letters from village to village on a regular basis. As agreed, he was receiving free prasad of Tarama. But, after sometime, as was usual for Bam, irregularity set in. While traveling between villages for delivery of letters, he would enter into liquor store and would become engrossed with joy after consumption of alcohol; still, for sometime he tried to maintain the delivery schedule. But gradually, Bam increased his liquor consumption to become more joyful in complete absorption in the name of Tarama. Consequently, in line with this engrossed state, Bam developed severe carelessness for his job. The situation became so critical that in spite of letters reaching to offices, these were floating around open lands and roads. This created great problem for the management of Natore estate; finally, under pressure from upper management, Durgadas Sarkar had to relieve Bam from this job of a peon.

But Bam was not ruffled. He arrived in this world to spread the great path of dedication and nectar of spirituality. Thus, is it possible for Avatara like him to deliver worthless letters of grief-stricken world? However, following the wishes of Tarama, Bam had to act for sometime in this world theatre as ordinary peon. As a result, both Tarama and Bam were quite happy. In fact, Tarama was one and all for Bam.

3.27 Daily Serving of Tara Temple

Durgadas Sarkar realized that Bam had same attitude for everything. If Bam was asked to call a specific person, he would find somebody else. For example, once, Durgadas Sarkar asked Bam to call Nimai Pal, but Bam hurriedly brought Ramkeli Pal. Durgadas Sarkar was quite annoyed with this uncommon behavior; even then, he was thinking how to save Bam and to arrange some monthly income for Rajkumari Devi.

Lila of Tarama was quite strange. Bam was always in deep engrossed state with thoughts of Tarama. On the other hand, Durgadas Sarkar who was not even relative of Bam was anxious to resolve the economic hardship of Bam and his family. This time, playful Tarama attracted Bam through Durgadas Sarkar to work in Her own temple. Accordingly, Bam was assigned to collect flowers for daily puja of Tarama.

But as usual, after sometime, problems set in. While plucking flowers Bam could visualize that flowers are really the grand offering to the supreme nature. This great puja of primordial nature is being performed all the time in sky, air, land, light, water, fruits and flowers – in every part of universe. Thus, how is it possible to pluck the flower for traditional puja after realizing this supreme puja by majestic universe? Thus, most of the time Bam could not pluck flowers. Consequently, priest would face problem to perform puja with flowers in normal way. As a result, complaint was sent to Durgadas Sarkar and he had to find some alternative job.

Durgadas Sarkar now assigned another job to Bam – arrangement of daily puja items of Tarama. But, here again, Bam had maintained his grand track record of failure. Bam could not arrange on a regular basis puja items like naivedya (food offerings placed on the altar at the time of worship), sandal etc.; as usual, temple priest was irritated and complained again to Durgadas Sarkar.

For the fifth time, Durgadas Sarkar found another job for Bam. This time, it was as a cook for the food-offering of Tarama. With great delight Bam started performing cooking job. But, history repeats itself. While cooking, Bam would sit in deep engrossed state for Tarama. Looking at the flame in oven Bam could see through his mental eye the glorious image of Tarama as She is ever present in the flame of funeral pyre. He would visualize that annamaya kosha (material body) and pranamaya kosha (vital component) of the body were burning under the heat of oven. Thus, he would meditate upon the supreme place beyond the boundary of five-layered entity (pancha kosha) of the body. As a result, food offering would be burnt in the material world, but Bam had no worry for this. Other people, after getting smell of burning food, would rush to the scene to control the situation. Consequently, there was again complaint against Bam for negligence of duty.

Not once but five times, one after another, Bam was offered job. But each time Bam was quite successful in spoiling it; hence, Durgadas Sarkar had no choice but to continue giving free prasad of Tarama to Bam without any real engagement. For this most sincere effort of Durgadas Sarkar to help Bam, in subsequent years if somebody talked about Durgadas Sarkar, Bam would very respectfully reply, "Uncle was a great man."

3.28 Dressing with Ochreous Cloth

Because of Durgadas Sarkar, Bam was receiving free prasad without performing any work. But this created trouble; many people were complaining against this injustice. Bam was healthy young man, why should he get free prasad without work? Durgadas Sarkar was worried because if this allegation would reach to the main office at Raghunath Ganja, he would be embarrassed; so, Durgadas Sarkar found a new way – Bam was offered the dress made of cloth dyed with red ochre which is typical of an Indian ascetic. Thus, at least in the eye of common people, Bam was outwardly recognized as an ascetic, and temporarily the problem of receiving daily free prasad which was reserved for only ascetics was resolved.

Bam was siddha and also sannyasi (ascetic) from birth. Thus, there was no need for him to dress with traditional ochreous cloth. However, recognizing most sincere effort by his uncle to arrange free prasad for him, he accepted this dress without any objection. Consequently, Bam was receiving free prasad as an ascetic. But many mean-minded people started criticizing about this fake arrangement. Because, to become ascetic, tradition is that one has to perform many difficult tasks including one's last rite (sraddha) before death. The idea is that ascetic becomes completely free from the bondage of worldly life.

Ordinary people look only at the formal part of the process to judge an ascetic; so, to them, Bam should not be recognized as an ascetic because Bam did not comply with the strict scriptural requirements. Unfortunately, these traditional, mean-minded, and observant of dry rituals did not have the capacity to realize true nature of Bam. In fact, unless Bam himself disclosed his identity, no body could understand him. A true sannyasi (ascetic) has to be free from three bondages or attachments – desire of son, desire of wealth, and desire of fame. Bam had none of these desires or bondages right from his birth. Therefore, Bam was always a perfect sannyasi.

3.29 Initiation in Bhaddapur

After a while from acceptance of ochreous cloth, Bam became very eager to receive formal initiation. Kula-guru (family preceptor) of his family lived in Bhaddapur which is situated at 4 miles in south-east direction from Tarapith. During end of Bengali calendar year 1264 (1857 AD), Bam went to kula-guru and received initiation. There is another story regarding this initiation of Bam: After sacred thread ceremony of Bam, noticing his sincerity and devotion, Sarvananda took him to kula-guru and got him initiated. Any way, in respect of mantra from kula-guru, Bam used to say in his usual amazing language – "wondrous powerful Vedik mantra." Generally Bam used "wondrous" to mean divine or sacred, and "powerful Vedik" to indicate highly effective.

This tradition of receiving initiation from kula-guru is quite old in Bengal. Vedik initiation (during thread ceremony) and Tantrik initiations (from kula-guru) are both prevalent in family life of Bengal. The word "kula-guru" is very meaningful. According to Tantra, "kula" means all 24 tattvas of Sankhya philosophy ranging from Prakriti (nature) to Prithvi (earth). The person who has conquered all of these 24 tattvas, he is respectfully regarded as "kaula" and he is truly worthy of calling "guru". He is also respected in the society as "kula-guru" and he could be either a family man or a sannasi.

It should be remembered that initiation is a must for human being; otherwise his life is almost like an animal. Liberation for an uninitiated person is extremely difficult. Generally, family man and woman take initiation from household kula-guru. This tradition is usually followed from generation to generation among descendants. In general, it is more favorable for a family person to be initiated by household kula-guru for the following reasons:

- Household kula-guru carries the highly effective (siddha) bija mantra which was generation-wise practiced by the predecessors with great devotion; so, fortunate disciple would receive that precious bija mantra from kula-guru and could carry that great tradition of Ishta sadhana of predecessors.
- Ishta also would be pleased and would grant overall welfare.
- Grace of household kula-guru will ensure peace and prosperity in earthly life.

It is generally not recommended for household person to receive initiation from a sannasi guru. Because, sannasi guru would naturally attract disciple towards renunciation, and if disciple is not ready for this higher level spiritual life he would be placed in great conflicting situation. Consequently, neither he would enjoy domestic life nor he could progress in spiritual path; so, household kula-guru is much more appropriate for a person who is not fully ready for renunciation. With the grace of household kula-guru, disciple would gradually elevate himself towards spiritual life and ultimately could receive the final goal of liberation.

Domestic life is more demanding than ascetic life in practicing spirituality. Most of the famous Hindu deities – Lakshmi and Narayana, Rama and Sita, Radha and Krishna, Shiva and Durga lead domestic life. Therefore, domestic life is not of lower value. In fact, many outstanding great spiritual personalities were engaged in domestic life. For example, Guru Nanak, Tulsidas, Mirabai, Ramprasad, Kamalakanta, Raja Ramkrishna, Shyamacharan Lahiri, Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa, Mother Saradamani, Vijaykrishna Goswami, Nag Mahasaya, Bishudhvananda Giri etc. are great examples of this successful tradition of household life.

Another meaning of "kula-guru" is that who can rouse Kula-Kundalini. Household person should remember that Kula-Kundalini is aroused by siddha bija mantra of kula-guru. Thus, qualities of kula-guru – siddha or not siddha, knowledgeable or illiterate, etc. are not for the disciple to judge. Kula-guru is a representative of Ishvara and that should be his image to a disciple. For anything less than that, there is no hope for a disciple in achieving success in spiritual path. Bam was Avatara of Shiva, even then he took initiation from a household kula-guru. This is a remarkable example of glorious Bengali tradition of initiation from a household kula-guru without questioning his qualification.

3.30 As a Cook in Raghunathganja

Bam accepted the ochreous cloth without any formal ceremony; so, this unofficial transformation was not appreciated by many crooked persons. But they were helpless due to Durgadas Sarkar. Meanwhile, Tarapuja during the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight in autumn was approaching. This puja is the greatest day of celebration in Tarapith; so, to participate in this great celebration, manager Bharat Maitra arrived from the main office of Natore estate at Raghunathganja in the Murshidabad District. Tarapith office was actually under the control and supervision of main office at Raghunathganja. The mean-minded people who had no respect for Bam complained to Bharat Maitra against receiving free prasad by Bam under the indulgence of Durgadas Sarkar. Bharat Maitra also found that Bam used to receive free prasad without performing any real work; so, he thought that if he could take this young Brahmin boy to Raghunathganja, he could be used as a cook and also this problem of free prasad would be solved. Consequently, Bharat Maitra was very actively pursuing Bam to go with him to Raghunathganja.

Bharat Maitra tried to convince Bam in many ways, but Bam was not eager to leave Tarapith; finally, Bharat Maitra requested help of Durgadas Sarkar to make Bam agreed to go with him; as request came from higher officer Bharat Maitra, so Durgadas Sarkar called Bam and said, "Bam, will you not take bath in holy River Ganges? Go for it." To any Hindu, bath in the River Ganges is considered as an act of virtue; so, Bam agreed to the suggestion of uncle Durgadas Sarkar. In this respect, many people think that this story of just and honest person like Durgadas Sarkar to convince Bam using trick to go to Raghunathganja as a cook might not be true; may be, this was an act of some obedient Panda of Bharat Maitra.

Anyway, Bam went with Bharat Maitra to Raghunathganja office. Bam was delighted to see the River Ganges. Everyday for several hours, both in the morning and afternoon, he used to take bath in the Ganges. To Bam, holy Mother Ganges is just another vivid form of endless forms of Tarama. Accordingly, he was quite happily spending time in meditating on Tarama. Bharat Maitra was very disgusted because everyday Bam would spend long time for taking bath in Ganges. In spite of this, with great patience, for over a month Bharat Maitra was teaching Bam the art of cooking; but, he had no idea about the real characteristic of Bam.

While cooking, Bam would totally immerse in the infinite nature of Tarama. As a result, sometimes rice would be burnt and other times soup of pigeon-pea also would follow the rice. Similar unwelcome situation would also happen to the fish and vegetable curry. Sometimes Bam would lose consciousness in the midst of burnt foods. However, Bharat Maitra was still trying to train Bam as a cook. But, the person who had come to this world to direct innumerable devotees towards the Lotus Feet of Tarama, was it possible for him to act like an ordinary cook for Bharat Maitra? He did not arrive to satisfy the low level demand of physical body but to uplift the subtle or glorious body of jiva through knowledge and devotion. Thus, in spite of his great effort, Bharat Maitra was not able to make Bam a good cook. Accordingly, under compulsion, he decided to send Bam back to Tarapith. Bam was also praying everyday to Mother Ganges for his return to Tarapith. Subsequently, Tarama responded to the call of Bam and irritated Bharat Maitra sent him back to Tarapith. Also, Bharat Maitra arranged to stop free prasad and monthly salary of five rupees to Bam.

Returning back to Tarapith, Bam was relieved from the mental agony. He expressed his great pleasure by rolling over the ground in front of Tarama. Ever well-wisher Durgadas Sarkar heard all incidents and realized that Bam was fully surrendered to Tarama. For five times he offered job to Bam, but each time Bam failed miserably. Thus, he came to the conclusion that Bam could not perform any worldly activity. However, for maintenance of body, Bam needed daily free prasad of Tarama. Unfortunately, that was stopped by the order of Bharat Maitra; in spite of that ban by his supervisor, brave and righteous Durgadas Sarkar arranged food and shelter of Bam in Tarapith. But that was just a temporary arrangement. Durgadas Sarkar realized that for receiving free prasad on permanent basis, Bam had to become a sannyasi (ascetic) through formal process. Therefore, on this matter, he wanted to seek help from Mokshadananda and Vrajavasi Kailaspati.

3.31 Renouncement of the World and Sadhana

True meaning of sannyas is complete renunciation (nyas) of all earthly desires. We have mentioned before that the person who can give up three material bondages - desire of son, desire of wealth, and desire of fame is a real sannyasi. In Indian scriptures many types of sannyas are mentioned. For example, there are jnyan (knowledge) sannyas, karma (action) sannyas, yoga sannyas, avadhuta (who has conquered ego to stay in pure consciousness in human form) sannyas, etc. Bam was a natural avadhuta; so, he was beyond both purity and impurity, beyond formality and informality, and beyond any other egoistic behavior. As a result, he was always in pure ecstatic state in meditation of Tarama. Therefore, he did not really require to follow any formal ritual to become a sannyasi. However, to set up an example for the world, he went through the formal process to become a recognized sannyasi in the eye of general public.

From the day Vrajavasi Kailaspati met Bam in the home of Durgadas Sarkar, he identified the symptoms of great saint on the body of Bam; so, when Durgadas Sarkar approached him for sannyas of Bam, he quite willingly agreed to his proposal. Bam was now a strong youngman, complete brahmachari, and capable of bearing severe hardship. He had also endless love and dependence on Tarama like a child. He would walk in the maha-shmashana of Tarapith in day and night without any fear. To be siddha, one has to conquer ashta-pasha (eight bondages/ chains) and shahra-ripu (six cardinal vices). Asta-pasha which bind soul to the maya are ghrina (hate), lajja (shame), bhaya (fear), jugupsa (censure/reproach), kula (caste), jati (creed) and shila (modesty). Shahra-ripu are kama (sexual desire), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (infatuation), mada (vanity), and matsarya (envy). None of these asta-pasha and shahra-ripu could control Bam; on the contrary, Bam had complete control on all of them even before becoming a formal sannyasi. Therefore, Bam was real worthy of taking sannyas.

Vrajavasi and Mokshadananda offered sannyas to Bam in the formal way. Bam also accepted this without any excitement. Bam started performing severe sadhana in the dense forest of maha-shmashana of Tarapith. This maha-shmashana is very alive. So, performing tantrik rituals in this maha-shmashana without assistance of a siddha sadhak is extremely difficult. Thus, Tarama brought siddha sadhak Vrajavasi Kailaspati from Vrindavan to guide Her dearest devotee Bam. Vrajavasi Kailaspati was respected by all as great saint. General public used to call him Mani Gonsai. There are hearsays about his extraordinary yogik power; for example, he would cross Dvaraka River on foot, could give life to dead plant, could fly in the air like a bird, etc. This super sadhak became the main guide of Bam in performing Tantrik sadhana. In addition, Tarama engaged Mokshadananda who was the chief kaula of Tarapith and also a very celebrated expert on Vedas to teach Bam. Thus, proper sadhana of Bam was started under perfect guidance of two outstanding siddha sadhakas of Tarama, Vrajavasi and Mokshadananda.

In the middle of night, at the foot of the maha shveta-shimul tree in the maha-shmashana of Tarapith, Bam used to make heartfelt sound, "Tara, Tara". That supreme sound would reverberate in the terrible silence of maha-shmashana. Ever alive maha-shmashana, as if, could recognize its forthcoming bhairava for half a century. With the help of Tantrik guru Vrajavasi Kailaspati and teacher Mokshadananda, Bam was progressing in the path of sadhana.

But it must be understood that this formal training and teaching are just the outward side of Bam's Tara sadhana. Inwardly, from birth, Bam was siddha, free, and fully renounced saint. According to Vedanta, liberation (moksha) could be achieved by following four main qualities: shama (control of mind), dama (control of sense organs), titiksha (endurance), and vairagya (renunciation). Yoga-Sutra of Patanjali prescribes ashtanga-yoga (eight-fold yogas) to achieve moksha. These eight limbs of yoga are:

Yama – Morality as expressed towards all others in the Universe
Niyama – Personal, internal ethical observances
Asana — Physical practices of your body
Pranayama – Controlled breathing exercises affecting your energy force
Pratyahara – Self control of the senses
Dharana – Focus, concentration and inner perception or intuition
Dhyana – Meditation of divine and spiritual concepts
Samadhi – Enlightenment and unification with the God.

In the body of Bam there were rare symptoms of saint as declared by Vedas and Tantras; also, in his extraordinary nature, there was expression of all pure or divine qualities like truthfulness, nonviolence, forgiveness, brahmacharya, compassion, patience, contentment, braveness, renouncement, total surrender, complete dedication, etc. Thus, Bam had all the outstanding qualities to gain moksha as required by Vedas, Tantras, and *Yoga-Sutra*.

There are three main stages of Tantrik sadhana from highest to lowest level: divyachara for practitioners of satva-guna, virachara for practitioners of rajo-guna and pashvachara for practitioners of tamo-guna. Even from his birth, Bam was full of divine qualities or divyachari; so, there was no need for him to follow the traditional progression of Tantrik sadhana from lowest level of pashvachara to highest level of divyachara. Therefore, his natural state was the divine state and his sadhana was just to set a glorious example for the mass education.

Bam did not study scriptures, practice yoga, and perform puja in traditional method. Yet, by his simple sadhana based on complete dedication and absolute surrender to Tarama he could become a great siddha. This proves that in Kali Yuga, one can achieve Ishta by sincere devotion, pure love, great renunciation, and complete surrender.

In Kali Yuga, life span of jiva is short and people are busy in fulfillment of basic needs; thus, difficult and long course of Vedic activities are impossible to perform by weak people in Kali Yuga. "Only Name of God" is the mantra of Kali Yuga. Just by japa (praying silently) siddha name (nam) of God like Tara nam (name of Tara), Shiva nam (name of shiva), and Durga nam (name of Durga) can liberate jiva in Kali Yuga. Kali Yuga is the greatest among Yugas because just by sincere japa of name of God, moksha can be attained. What a simple but effective idea!

Shiva Avatara Bam took birth to disclose and spread this maha-siddha Tara nam, real nature of Tara, and endless grace of Tarama among the people in this world. Sannyas and sadhana of Bam were really for the sake of mass education.

3.32 Ceremonial Induction

After acceptance of formal sannyas by Bam, Vrajavasi Kailaspati wanted to induce and initiate Bam to help him for advancement in sadhana. However, as usual, Bam was always engrossed in the thoughts of Tarama; so, acceptance or rejection of these rituals was of no consequence to him. But Bam arrived in this world to act as an ideal guru, so he had to behave like a perfect disciple to set an ideal example for the public. Accordingly, like an obedient disciple, Bam followed every direction of Vrajavasi Kailaspati and Mokshadananda. In the eye of Kailaspati and Mokshadananda, Bam was just a mad son (khyapa) of Tarama with excellent spiritual quality. Therefore, under their active guidance, one day this khyapa could become a siddha sadhak. But they had absolutely no idea about the real nature of Bam. Bam also concealed his true identity by behaving like a khyapa. This mysterious act of Bam was in fact a grand lila of Tarama. However, in proper time, one by one, Bam himself would draw the curtain of mystery.

Anyway, Vrajavasi Kailaspati decided to initiate Bam in the auspicious night of coming Kali puja. But, Bam needed to be ceremonially induced before initiation. At the instance of chief kaula Mokshadananda, Vrajavasi made him responsible to arrange the ceremony of induction.

Based on the physical symptoms and spiritual nature of Bam, Vrajavasi Kailaspati sometimes realized that Bam could be an Avadhuta from birth; so, before initiation, Bam really did not require any induction; however, following tradition and at the instance of Mokshadananda, Kailaspati agreed to induce Bam.

One day before Kali puja, in thirteenth day of dark fortnight, Mokshadananda completed recitation of the Vedas. Bam listened to the recitation of Vedas with great calm and gravity. In next day, on the fourteenth day of dark fortnight, Bam would be initiated. In early morning of the fourteenth day, Bam was sent for begging rice (this is a ritual for induction). Accordingly, Bam traveled many nearby villages and collected good quantity of rice. This begged rice was cooked and offered to Tarama, and afterwards prasad was distributed to Brahmins and poor people. The ceremony was finally completed with the performance of homa (an oblation of fire into which ghee is poured) and other rituals. Fasting Bam remained in deeply engrossed state in the thoughts of Tarama.

3.33 Self-Guru Bam and Disclosure of his True Identity to Kailaspati

In the grand night of the fourteenth day of dark fortnight, maha-shmashana of Mahapith Tarapith was becoming alive. Divinity of maha-shmashana was also in the revealing phase. In this dense darkness and deep silence, Vrajavasi Kailaspati was sitting under the great shveta-shimul tree. In spite of the violent nature and display of strong divinity of maha-shmashana, ever brave Kailaspati had no problem of concentration. Bam also was sitting nearby and waiting to be initiated by Kailaspati.

Kailaspati asked Bam in grave voice,"Khyapa, come after taking bath. I will initiate you." Immediately, in the deep darkness, Bam walked over scattered human skeletons and skulls, and through foxes and dogs, to Jivitakunda for taking bath.

Vrajavasi was much respected person in Tarapith. He was tall, handsome, and person of reserve in speech and manner. While waiting for Bam, Vrajavasi was in deep thinking mood for initiation mantra. Tradition is that this sacred initiation mantra is very alive and disciple must repeat it silently (japa) according to strict instruction from initiating guru. Meanwhile Bam came back after taking bath. Vrajavasi Kailaspati offered Bam a twelve-syllable initiation mantra; but, Bam replied, "I can not do it." So, Kailaspati reduced mantra from twelve-syllable to nine-syllable. Bam declined to accept this mantra; so, under compulsion, Vrajavasi reduced mantra further from nine-syllable to only six-syllable; even that was declined by Bam. Rejection of mantra for three times made Vrajavasi really worried.

Meanwhile, ganja was ready to be served. Kailaspati prepared a chillum of ganja, ignited it, and in meditative condition he was offering it to Tarama. Meanwhile, Bam took the chillum, smoked ganja, and then left it in its original place. Just at that moment, Vrajavasi opened his eyes and saw the unnatural act of his very devoted disciple Bam. In defense of his act, Bam said,"fire in chillum was about to be extinguished; so, I have just kept it ignited."

But Kailaspati did not accept this as an accidental event. Kailaspati was a siddhapurusha and his nature was very calm and composed; consequently, instead of reprimanding Bam, he went on meditation to find the true cause of this incident. In his deep meditation he was very excited to see that this naked Bam was none other than Shiva himself; therefore, how could he offer initiation mantra to great Lord Shiva? Right from that moment, Vrajavasi stopped calling Bam with informal "you" but started addressing him with respectful "sir" as appropriate for senior people.

Kailaspati said to Bam with respect," Baba (Father), what do you want for japa mantra?" Bam replied with great assurance, "Jay Jay Tara." Vrajavasi said with profound humility, "Father, you may perform this japa. This is your mantra." In this way, Shiva Avatara Bam disclosed his true identity to Kailaspati. Also, he made it clear that it was not Kailaspati but Bam himself was his initiating guru.

This wonderfully divine lila of Bam was narrated to the author (Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay) by the siddhapurusha Bhairavdas Jnyanananda Avadhut. The author is ever grateful to him for this.

3.34 Mantrasiddhi of Sri Bam

In the most auspicious moment of Kali puja during the fourteenth day of dark fortnight, maha-shmashana of Tarapith was becoming alive. Dumb shmashana of daytime was transformed into talkative shmashana in the sacred night. Covered under deep darkness, maha-shmashana appeared to be terrible by the noisy movement of foxes and dogs over the human bones and skulls, crying of many young vultures, crawling of poisonous snakes, unnatural vibration of wild trees, and sigh of bodiless spirits. In addition, majestic divinity of maha-shmashana also started to reveal.

A little ago, Bam showed his real identity to Kailaspati. Now, Bam was entering into deep meditation by japa of his own mantra "Jay Jay Tara". Gradually, divinity of maha-shmashana also was taking terrible shape. Maha-shmashana was getting flooded with acute bad odour. Violent crying and terrible laughter of bodiless spirits were breaking the deep silence of maha-shmashana. But Bam had no concern for this horrible atmosphere as he was immersed in deepest meditation.

All of a sudden, this terrible scene disappeared. Maha-shmashana was transformed into a lake surrounded by a beautiful garden. A wonderful and charming atmosphere was created due to – sweet aroma of flowers, charming chirping of birds, dance and song from countless beautiful women, and play of beautiful women without cloth in water of the lake. Bodiless spirits of his dead relatives were desperately calling Bam and requesting him earnestly to withdraw from the austerity.

But, Bam was then in complete integration with mahamantra "Jay Jay Tara". Consequently, he was fully absorbed in his own self and had no sense for the surrounding. At 3 am in the night, suddenly Bam could hear the sound of the nupur (anklet made with small bells) in his inner mind; gradually, divine bliss was flowing through every pore of the skin of his body and whole area was filled with heavenly scent. All of a sudden, entire area under great shveta-shimul tree was flooded with bright bluish light. Then, supreme meditation of Bam was interrupted and he noticed his dearest and ever blissful Tarama standing with smiling face in front of him. Bam became extremely delighted and rolled over Lotus Feet of Tarama. With great affection, universal Mother Tara lifted him and took him on Her sacred lap and physical body of Bam lost consciousness by the touch of Her divine body.

In approximately Bengali calendar year of 1270 (1863 AD), on the auspicious fourteenth day of dark fortnight during Kali puja, Bam or Sri Sri Bamakhyapa attained this maha-siddhi. In some other opinion, Bam attained this maha-siddhi on the night of the Shiva-Chaturdashi. Bam attained this majestic siddhi in one night by japa of the mantra created by him. Such an extraordinary event has never happened in the history of Indian sadhana. Consequently, Shiva Avatara Sri Sri Bamakhyapa will be remembered and adored for ever as a bright star among Indian siddha sadhakas.

3.35 In the Context of Siddhi of Sri Bam

In the context of siddhi of Sri Bam, Khaki Baba narrated this wonderful story:

Once, on an auspicious night, young and powerful sadhak Sri Bam was performing Japa under the great shveta-shimul tree of maha-shmashana of Tarapith. Adjacent to Sri Bam, another spirited and powerful Tantrik was performing sadhana sitting over corpse. This sadhak was not local; he came from outside of Tarapith for sadhana. Bam was his obedient follower; most probably, this sadhak was Vrajavasi Kailaspati.

Suddenly, the lamp by the side of the corpse was extinguished. It is a strict instruction of Tantra that during sadhana with corpse lamp must be kept burning. Therefore, that Tantrik sadhak had to leave the corpse and was walking towards the temple in search of items for lighting the lamp. Before his departure, he instructed Bam to watch over corpse to ensure that corpse must not get up from lying position.

As soon as Tantrik sadhak was little away from the place, that corpse got up and in loud voice cried, "Bama, give me liquor." Bam was bewildered on this sudden and terrible call. Consequently, he rushed to the corpse and picked up the liquor-vessel. Meanwhile, listening to that loud cry, Tantrik sadhak instructed Bam not to offer liquor to the corpse. But in spite of this objection, Bam poured liquor into mouth of the corpse.

Immediately, a supernatural incident happened. Suddenly, the place of corpse was filled with the very bright bluish light and Tarama was seen standing in that light in the form of Ugra-Tara. This form of

Tarama is very horrific – four-handed, loll-tongued, and violent. Bam was totally stunned with fear and surprise. With tears of joy, Bam asked Tarama why not that Tantrik but he had the fortune to receive Her audience; Tarama replied, "This Tantrik will not receive my audience in this life but he will be siddha in the next life."

Meanwhile, when that Tantrik came back and burned the lamp near corpse, Tarama disappeared. Tantrik could realize from the divine radiance flowing from whole body of Bam that Bam had the great fortune of receiving audience of Tarama. With tears of joy, he embraced Bam and congratulated him for this outstanding event. A few days later, that Tantrik left Tarapith.

The above story regarding siddhi of Sri Bam was disclosed by Khaki Baba to his very close disciple Mahadevananda Avadhut. Subsequently, he narrated this to his disciple Amarendra Kumar Gangopadhyay. The writer (Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay) heard this story from Amarendra Kumar Gangopadhyay; for which he is ever grateful.

There is another story regarding siddhi of Sri Bam, and this was disclosed by his very close associate Abhay Pada Chattopadhyay. This story is basically similar to above; only difference is that after siddhi of Sri Bam, Tantrik became insane with grief and regret.

There are two opinions regarding lunar day at the time of siddhi of Bam. The first view is that on the auspicious day of Kali puja on the fourteenth lunar day of dark fortnight of the Bengali month of Kartik (October – November) Bam attained maha-siddhi. Second opinion is that on the auspicious day of Shiva puja on the fourteenth lunar day of dark fortnight Bam attained maha-siddhi. There is one great similarity between these two opinions – both have confirmed that Bam attained siddhi on the fourteenth lunar day.

Bam was born on the fourteenth lunar day and on the same fourteenth lunar day he attained siddhi. In ancient time, Vashishthadeva attained siddhi in Tarapith on the Kojagari (day of full Moon in Bengali month Ashvin – Kartik) fourteenth lunar day. In Kali Yuga, Jaydatta Banik attained siddhi in Tarapith on the Kojagari fourteenth lunar day. The most important celebration of Tarapith is also performed on the Kojagari fourteenth lunar day. Thus, this fourteenth lunar day is very auspicious and ever memorable in the history of sadhana in Tarapith. The fourteenth lunar day (Chaturdashi Tithi) is also famous as lunar day of Tara (Tara Tithi).

3.36 Siddhi-Rudra Sri Bam

Bam did not perform sadhana for a long time but performing sadhana for only one night he attained siddhi. This created a big excitement among sadhus of Tarapith. Siddha can be categorized in many groups; for example, sadhan-siddha (siddha by severe sadhana for a long time), yoga-siddha (siddha through practice of yoga), Jnana-siddha (siddha through development of wisdom), bhakti-siddha (siddha by devotion), and kripa-siddha (siddha by spontaneous grace of deity). Some thought that Bam performed severe sadhana in his past life. Consequently, as a reward, in this life he attained siddhi so quickly. Others felt that Bam was very fortunate to receive spontaneous grace of Tarama. Therefore, he did not need any severe sadhana to become siddha.

Nobody knows the real reason behind this spontaneous grace; that is why it is spontaneous or beyond reason. However based on the lives of great sadhakas who received this majestic spontaneous grace of deity, it can be said that unconditional surrender like a child, unlimited dedication, and limitless sincerity might in some way generate the auspicious condition suitable for receiving this invaluable gift. For example, famous siddha sadhakas like Krishnananda Agamvagish, Brahmananda, Sarvananda, Ramprasad, Kamalakanta, and Ramkrishna could be quoted as few fortunates who received this spontaneous grace in unlimited quantity. Siddha sadhakas of Tarapith including Khaki Baba and Mokshadananda understood that the attainment of siddhi of Bam in just one night sadhana could not be possible unless he was fortunate enough to receive the priceless gift of spontaneous grace of Tarama. Consequently, they declared Bam as "kripa-siddha". Bam was recognized as "kripa-siddha", but this was only his outward appearance; actually, inwardly he was siddha from birth and a natural "Siddhi-Rudra".

It is described in the *Gupta-Chinachara-Tantra* that in Kali Yuga, the greatest among 100,000 siddha sadhakas would be like "Siddhi-Rudra" and he would burn the maha-shveta shimul tree. Subsequently, Shiva Avatara Bam, greatest sadhak of Tarapith in Kali Yuga, burnt the maha-shveta shimul tree as a "Siddhi-Rudra".

Shiva and Shakti are indistinguishable. Whoever can win Shakti by sadhana, only he can be really called as Rudra. Also, greatest among the Rudras is Shiva himself. This statement is supported by the *Geeta* (10/23) – *"Rudranam shankarashchasmi"* – Among the Rudras, I am Shankara. Bam was Shiva Avatara, maha Tantrik, maha Yogi, and always in ecstasy in the feeling of Tarama; therefore, who else can be worthier than Bam to be designated as Rudra? Indeed, Bam was a "Siddhi-Rudra" without any doubt.

In this context, it is mentionable that as Shyam and Shyama are inseparable, so are Hara (Shankara or Shiva) and Hari (Shyam or Vishnu) – same Ishvara with attributes but in different forms. Bam was Shiva Avatara or Hara Avatara, but he was also revealed in the form of Shyam or Hari. Many of his disciples including Hrishikesh Chattopadhyay and Nagendranath Bagchi had the great fortune to witness this divine lila of Bam.

3.37 Disappearance of Vrajavasi Kailaspati

One day, after attainment of siddhi of Bam, Vrajavasi Kailaspati came to see Bam to bid farewell. Following the direction of Tarama he came to Tarapith and with his help Bam attained siddhi. In addition, he had the great fortune to witness the real identity of Bam; furthermore, through his mental eye he could see that occupying the siddha asana of Vashishthadeva Bam would soon commence his divine lila. Therefore, he was not needed anymore; also, it is a tradition that two Kaulas should not stay in the same place. Consequently, he decided to go back to Vrindavan.

On the eve of departure of Vrajavasi Kailaspati, Bam and Mokshadananda showed their great respect to him. Vrajavasi came out from his hut, traveled through maha-shmashana, and crossed the Dvaraka River. As a respect to Kailaspati, Bam and his friend was following him; but, all on a sudden they noticed that Vrajavasi disappeared with his Bhairavi (female associate to help sadhana). According to Bam's peculiar language, this was like, "Senior Kailaspati flew over the sky as a bird."

Bam had always maintained his great respect for Vrajavasi Kailaspati. In subsequent years, Bam used to show to his many devotees the particular ghata which was used by Kailaspati during his final departure by crossing the Dvaraka River.

3.38 Visit to Kashi by Sri Bam

After disappearance of Vrajavasi Kailaspati, young sadhak Bam was always in ecstasy on Tarama. He had really no attraction for the worldly life. Based on the physical structure and nature of Bam, Mokshadananda sometimes used to feel that Bam could be the incarnation of sage Vashishthadeva. But, this feeling could not become permanent as he was not absolutely sure about the real identity of Bam. Consequently, sometimes he used to consider Bam as an ordinary graced child of Tarama, nothing more than that.

In this time (approximately Bengali calendar year of 1271 or 1864 AD), Chief Kaula Mokshadananda was invited by Brahmin society of Kashi for a visit. Mokshadananda wished to take Bam with him; so he asked Bam for the visit. Bam used to call Tarama as "Barama" or "Eldest Mother" as a mark of great respect. Bam could not do anything without permission of Tarama; so he went to the temple and report the whole matter to Barama. However, he did not get any response. In fact, it appeared that Tarama did not like this idea.

Bam told Mokshadananda that he did not receive permission from Tarama. Therefore, he would not like to go. In the meantime, Mokshadananda collected cost of traveling to Kashi for him and Bam from the pilgrims. As a result, if Bam could not go, he could be responsible for breach of trust. He called Bam and explained the situation. Kind hearted Bam realized that his respected teacher Mokshadananda would be in big trouble without his help. Consequently, inspite of unwillingness to go due to rejection of this idea by Tarama, just to keep the honor and truthfulness of teacher Mokshadananda Bam agreed to visit Kashi with him.

Bam was a champion truth-lover. Forget about common people, even great sadhakas could not be so dedicated to truth. But everything was possible for Bam. Because, as avatara of Shiva, he was Truth (Satya), God (Shiva) and Beautiful (Sundar). Also, Tarama is the ever embodiment of blissful Shiva. This Tarama was the heart of Bam. Thus, by complete devotion to truth, Bam was actually always in full union with Tarama.

On the morning of an auspicious day in Bengali calendar year of 1271 (1864 AD), Bam started traveling with Mokshadananda for Kashi. Although Bam was walking, his whole heart was aspiring to go back to Tarapith. Mokshadananda understood this feeling – this was like taking away forcefully a son from his mother. Thus, both Tarama and Her son Bam were in great distressful mood. However, Mokshadananda had no choice. Accordingly, with great persuasion he could make Bam agree to travel with him.

Bam was carrying a few items belonging to Mokshadananda. For example, cloth-bag, water pot, and tongs. Bam had no item of this nature, he was just wearing a small piece of loincloth like a traditional ascetic and a sheet of cloth over his body. Anyway, walking through village road they reached the Rampurhat railway station. Mokshadananda purchased two tickets for Kashi and they boarded the train. Bam was quite amused by the speed and movement of train. To Bam Tarama is responsible for everything; so, he was in deeply engrossed state thinking that the English could make this train because Tarama wanted them to do so.

The train was running towards the oldest city in the world, Kashi. In the spiritual history of India, Kashi enjoys an outstanding place of unparallel nobility. Name of Kashi is referred with great respect in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and different puranas like *Shivapurana*, *Skandapurana*, *Markandeyapurana*, etc. From time immemorial, limitless contribution of the sacred city Kashi in the field of religion, education, and civilization has been continuing without any break. Thus, the glory of Kashi is incomparable.

On the origin of Kashi, following stories are described in the *Shivapurana* and *Skandapurana*:

In the primordial time, only infinite supreme lord Shiva was in existence. He was manifested from inexpressible to expressible state. From His supreme power, Purusha and Prakriti were created. Shiva told them to perform religious austerity. With great respect they said that there was no visible gross place in the world where they could stay and perform austerity. Consequently, Shiva created a divine city in the sky called Panchakroshi using all auspicious and sacred materials.

In this city of Panchakroshi, by the direction of Shiva, Vishnu started performing religious austerity for the purpose of creation. Vishnu became very tired due to this hard austerity for long time. Accordingly, a stream of water flooded the Panchakroshi city. Witnessing this astonishing act, head of Vishnu was shaken. As a result of this, His ear ring made of gems fell. The sacred place where this ear ring fell is now known as Manikarnika. Shiva captured this huge flood water in His trident (trishul). Afterwards, in Panchakroshi city, Vishnu entered into self-absorbed trance along with prakriti. Brahman emerged from the lotus-like navel of Vishnu. By the instruction of Shiva, Brahman created this universe. In the course of time, this "Panchakroshi" has become known as "Kashi". Divine subtle form of Panchakroshi is panchakosha (five covers of soul) which represent the basic elements of human form.

There is another story in Purana about the origin of Kashi. King Kashi, who was the grandson of Kshatrabridhva of Moon-Dynasty, established this kingdom "Kashi" as a commemoration of his name.

Another name of Kashi is "Varanasi". Sacred rivers Varuna and Asi are flowing by encircling Kashi in crescent Moon fashion. Thus, Kashi is also famous because of these two names, Varuna and Asi.

Kashi is the land of third (tritiya) of Dasha (ten) Mahavidyas, or Shohrashi. Maheshvari (wife of Maheshvara or Shiva) Annapurna who is the possessor of sattva, rajas, and tamas attributes is the empress of Kashi. Grantor of eight siddhis (spiritual powers) Annapurna gracefully resides here for ages. It is said that in the kingdom of Annapurna or in Kashi, nobody goes hungry; Mother Annapurna Herself provides food.

Kashi is famous for the best center of advance study of Vedanta. In addition to Vedanta, Kashi is also the place of learning for different religious paths. Thus, in all ages, there has been great unification of countless spiritual leaders from all faiths in this holy land. Consequently, the place of Kashi is supreme in the field of religion and learning.

God Vishvanatha (Shiva) is the master of Kashi. Therefore, Kashi is well-known as a great place for Shaivites (devotees of Shiva). Additionally, sacred ear ring of Sati fell at Manikarnika of Kashi. Therefore, holy Kashi is also famous as a living Satipith. Consequently, Kashi is a supreme land of religion or maha-tirtha.

Historical tradition of Kashi is also outstanding. Royal family of Kashi is well-known from ancient time. For example, it is mentioned in the *Ramayana* that in the Treta Yuga, Dasaratha invited king of Kashi in the religious act performed with an objective to become father of a son. Also, in the *Mahabharata* we find that in the Dvapar Yuga great warrior Vishva lifted by force three daughters of king of Kashi. In the era of Buddha, Prasenjit of Kashi was a very mighty king. In the period of the English rule, bravery of King Chait Singh is well-known. After Chait Singh, Kashi became a subordinate state of British India.

From the time immemorial, great saints, sadhakas, and spiritual seekers from all sects have been visiting this holy land of Kashi. In ancient time, famous spiritual giants like Agastya, Gautam, Vashishtha, Vyasdeva, etc. came to Kashi. In the Treta Yuga, Sri Ramachandra visited Kashi. In the Dvapar Yuga Sri Krishna came to Kashi. In the Kali Yuga, countless spiritual masters like Buddha, Mahavir, Shankaracharya, Sri Chaitanya, Guru Nanak, Ramananda, Kavir, Trailangaswami, Shyamacharan Lahiri, Ramprasad, Kamalakanta, Ramkrishna Paramahamsa, Vishudhvananda Paramahamsa, etc. lived or visited Kashi.

At last, after one day and one night of train journey, Mokshadananda and Bam arrived at Kashi. Mokshadananda studied for a long time in Kashi in his youth. Therefore, Kashi was quite familiar to him. He brought Bam to famous Gopalbahri, a charitable guesthouse in Bangalitola of Kashi maintained by the great Rani Bhavani of Bengal.

Compared to Tarapith, Kashi is much more crowded and noisy. Bam was always a quiet and peaceful person. Therefore, he was very disgusted by this crowd and noise. Anyway, just after taking bath in the holy River Ganges and visiting God Vishvanatha and Goddess Annapurna, Bam requested Mokshadananda to go back to Tarapith. Mokshadananda felt embarrassed. However, with long persuasion, he managed to keep him quiet.

Gradually, Bam was becoming more irritated with the crowd and noise of Kashi. He was wondering how Vishvanatha and Annapurna could live in this abnormal atmosphere. In comparison, he thought Tarama lives in more pleasant and peaceful place.

Bam was getting much annoyed for another reason. It was his habit to perform defecation and urination in open land. But in Kashi he faced a big problem as he had to perform these activities in a small closed room. Also, many times he could not maintain the discipline of performing defecation and urination in allotted place. As a result, there was trouble and people complained against him to Mokshadananda. Consequently he was reprimanded by Mokshadananda.

Kashi is the land of Shohrashi, the Goddess who grants yogik power and wealth. On the other hand, Goddess Kali and Tara are Goddess of granting liberation. Thus, Ramprasad who was worshipper of Kali did not like Kashi. It was the same situation with Kamalakanta. Therefore, it is quite expected that Tara worshipper Bam could not like Kashi.

Bam was so disgusted that he even started scolding Vishvanatha and Annapurna. Only for two items he had some peace – one was daily bath in the River Ganges, other was the Tara temple inside Gopalbahri. There are six big temples inside Gopalbahri. These are: temples of Vishalakshi, Radha-Govinda, Gopal, Jay Bhavani Durga, Kali, and Tara. Inside Tara temple, majestic idol of Tarama resides over the tomb of Tarasundari who was the daughter of Rani Bhavani. Tarama was everything to Bam. Naturally, Bam was very fond of this Tara temple.

Bam lived in Kashi for three days. On third day, while wondering in the streets of Kashi, Bam arrived at the famous Manikarnika maha-shmashana. People believe that after cremation in this sacred maha-shmashana, God Shiva and Goddess Parvati grant instant salvation to jivas and send them to heaven. Thus, it is a matter of great fortune for somebody to be cremated in this maha-shmashana of Kashi. Consequently, many religious persons live in Kashi just to obtain final liberation after death.

3.39 Respectful Reception of Sri Bam by Trailangaswami

When Bam arrived at Manikarnika maha-shmashana, living Shiva Trailangaswami was sitting there with devotees. It is said that by looking at Bam from a distance, Trailangaswami asked one of his devotees to hurriedly bring a piece of cloth. Few hundred years old maha-yogi Trailangaswami was beyond the worldly sense of physical body. Thus, no cloth was necessary for him for the fear of public disgrace. Consequently, he used to remain always naked. Therefore, everybody was surprised to note that Trailangaswami asked for a piece of cloth. Anyway, he got the cloth and covered his body.

In the meantime, Bam arrived. Trailangaswami was very excited with joy and embraced Bam with both hands. Everybody was amused to see this wonderful scene where young bhairava of Tarapith and super old living Shiva of Kashi were in close embraced position with great bliss. Bam was then an ordinary young sadhak of only 27 years old but super sadha Trailangaswami already crossed few hundred years. In fact, he was 257 years old.

Devotees wanted to know why Trailangaswami asked for a cloth when Bam was approaching him. He said to them with delight, "After a long time, I could find somebody to be worthy of calling a man. As a result, I have felt a little shame. I do not have the same feeling for you because you are really not man to me."

In later period, during his visit to Kashi, Sri Ramkrishna paid a great respect for Trailangaswami. He said, "God Vishvanatha himself lives in his body." Like Bam, another Bengali super-yogi, Shyamacharan Lahiri, received a very warm reception from Trailangaswami. Many Bengali sadhakas like Swami Nigamananda, Vijoykrishna Goswami, Purnananda Swami, Swami Vivekananda, etc. also came in contact with Trailangaswami and received his grace.

Trailangaswami was born on fifth Paush (December - January) in the Bengali calendar year 1014 (1607 AD) at Holia village in Telengana (now Andhra) state of south India. His father, Nrisinghadev belonged to a rich Brahmin landlord family. His mother was Vidyavati, worshipper of Gauri-Shankara. They were not having any child; so, to save the family continuity, Nrisinghadev had to marry for the second time. Consequently, from his second wife, he had a son named Sridhar.

After some time God fulfilled the desire of childless Vidyavati; she gave birth a divine son like Shiva. Son was named Trailangadhar. Vidyavati used to call him affectionately as Shivaram. Right from childhood, Trailanga was an introvert and spiritual. He received traditional sacred thread through customary ceremony at the age of nine. His parents noticed the tendency of his detachment from worldly affairs. Accordingly, to make him a household person, parents got him married (in some other account, he was never married).

After the death of his parents, Trailanga received initiation from Bhagirathswami in Pushkar and became known as Trailangaswami. Afterwards, on foot he traveled far and wide in India, Nepal, and Tibet. At this time he became famous for his supernatural yogik power. He received initiation in sannyas from the maha sadhak of Sringeri temple Vidyananda Saraswati. In the Bengali calendar year of 1144 (1737 AD), he came to Kashi and finally settled in the bank of the River Ganges.

His divine lila was performed for more than 100 years in Kashi. At this time, 150 years old Bhagaban Ganguly came to see Trailangaswami with his two disciples – 100 years old Lokenath

Brahmachari and Madhavananda Giri. Maha-yogi Bhagaban Ganguly made Trailangaswami the custodian for these two disciples and gave up his body in yoga asana at the Manikarnika maha-shmashana.

Trailangaswami went out with Lokenath Brahmachari and Madhavananda Giri (Benimadhav Bandopadhyay) as wandering ascetics. Near Makka, they met with 400 years old maha-yogi Gaphur. Four yogis including Gaphur started wandering the world on foot. They traveled for 32 years covering 84000 miles. At last, Trailangaswami returned to Kashi. Under his direction, Lokenath Brahmachari set up his hermitage at Bardi in Bengal, and Madhavananda Giri settled at Kamakhya in north-east India. Yogi Gaphur returned to Makka. In 1973 AD, Madhavananda Giri himself told this incident to the writer (Sri Bipul Kumar Bandopadhyay).

Sannyas name of Trailangaswami was Hitalal Mishra, but he was famous in India as Trailangaswami. He was a super yogi who conquered all worldly troubles of grief, disease, and physical decay. On the eleventh day of the while fortnight during Paush month in the Bengali calendar year 1294 (1887 AD) this living Shiva of Kashi gave up his body at the super-human age of 280 years.

Bam met Trailangaswami for the first time in his gross form in Kashi. However, in later years Bam was fortunate to be in contact with Trailangaswami in his subtle form on numerous occasions. Anyway, after the great reception of Bam by Trailangaswami, Bam wanted to go back to his dearest place Tarapith. Bam had no concern for public reception, for him, except Tarama, everything else was useless. Thus, he forgot even the rare honor given to him by Trailangaswami.

Bam gave his own name (Bam) at the age of two and half years. In youth, he created his japa mantra (Jay Jay Tara). Even before siddhi he disclosed his real identity to Vrajavasi Kailaspati. So, it was not possible for ordinary people to comprehend the spiritual level of Bam. Of course, Tarama knew all. Perhaps maha-yogi Trailangaswami could realize the real identity of Bam. Actually, God Vishvanatha arranged this appropriate public reception through Trailangaswami.

Bam received a rare reception from Trailangaswami; even Mother Annapurna provided food to Bam in supernatural way. But these had no effect on Bam. Consequently, he started towards Gopalbahri guesthouse to pursue Mokshadananda for his immediate return to Tarapith. Tarama did respond to this eagerness of Bam. Accordingly, through a peculiar quarrel She arranged the departure of Bam from Kashi.

3.40 Departure from Kashi

From the beginning, the guesthouse manager was unhappy with Bam for his irresponsibility in defecation and urination. So, when Bam arrived at the guesthouse for accepting free food, all of a sudden in front of Mokshadananda, the manager asked Bam about his Veda and Gotra (lineage according to saint). For Bam, everything was Tarama. Accordingly, he replied, "Tara Veda" and "Tara Gotra". Hearing this peculiar answer, assembled Brahmins and sadhus started taunting Bam. Mokshadananda became irritated for this insult. The guesthouse manager disrespectfully asked Bam to sit on the floor with the beggars instead of sadhus. Bam was beyond honor and dishonor. Consequently, he ate along with the beggars.

After the meal, Mokshadananda reprimanded Bam for this unnatural reply of Tara Veda and Tara gotra. Scholar of Vedas Mokshadananda could not understand the significance of Bam's reply. It was beyond his comprehension that somebody could be so dedicated to Tarama. Accordingly, inspite of Bam's formal teacher, he could never realize the real identity of Bam. Thus, they started advancing arguments and counter-arguments. At last, enraged Mokshadananda hit divine body of Bam with his slipper. This was enough for Bam; he decided to leave Mokshadananda and prepared to return alone to his beloved Tarapith.

Bam had no idea how to return to Tarapith by traveling more than 400 miles. From a social point of view, he was a typical simple man from a rural area; moreover, he was penniless. Bam went to Kashi without permission of Tarama. Thus, She wanted to teach Bam a little lesson about practical life. She knew how much Bam was devoted to Her. But still for the sake of mass education, She allowed Bam to suffer for the disobedience.

The whole day Bam wandered along the streets of Kashi. He was hungry but did not ask anybody for food. For lunch, he managed with only bel-leaf and the Ganges water. He spent the night under the open sky in the ghata of the river Ganges. In Kashi, the land of Annapurna, nobody goes hungry; so, Mother Annapurna came in disguise and supplied food to Bam.

Anyway, next day Bam went to the Kashi railway station. But he had no money to buy train ticket, so he started walking on foot. This time, Tarama became a little helpful. A group of carters were going towards Patna. Bam followed them. Carters became friendly and compassionate due to pure and divine nature of Bam. From time to time, they allowed Bam to sit in the cart. Also, they shared their food with him. After reaching Patna, carters showed Bam the way to Bengal.

Now Bam became alone, but still he continued his journey through lonely forest and mountainous roads. In this world, the one who does not have any support, God Himself takes care of him; in other words, loss on one side is gain on the other. In the *Geeta*, Sri Krishna promised that whoever makes absolute surrender to Him, He will carry his burden and will maintain him. Shyam (Sri Krishna) and Shyama (Tarama) are identical. Therefore, this promise of Shyam had to be also honored by Tarama. Now, Tarama started accompanying Bam; sometimes, as a small girl; another-time, as an old lady; She was protecting Bam with food and water.

Through complete dependence and absolute devotion, Bam won the heart of Tarama. She put Her dearest son Bam to a serious test; but in that game, Mother lost to Her son. However, in this defeat there was no shame. She was proud to be the Mother of winner Bam. At last, after about one month of traveling, Bam arrived at Vaidyanath, famous holy place for Shaivites.

3.41 Sri Bam in Vaidyanath

When Bam arrived at famous Vaidyanath near Deoghar under Bihar state, he felt better because Tarapith is not too far from Vaidyanath; only about 100 miles away. After taking bath, Bam visited the temple and deity Vaidyanatha. But here also lot of noise and crowd. Thus, he was not getting enough rest. However, his restlessness was better than his condition in Kashi.

Vaidyanath is one of the super holy lands in India for Shaivites; this is the sacred lila place of one of the self-born Shivas. From time immemorial, countless sadhus and devotees have been visiting this living land of Shiva. In Satyayuga, heart of the sacred Sati fell here; Devi is Jaydurga and Bhairava is Vaidyanatha.

Origin of Vaidyanath dham has been beautifully described in the *Shivapurana*: In the Tretayuga, Ravana, a super devotee of Shiva, was ruler of Lanka. Once upon a time, he decided to bring Shiva forever from Kailas mountain to Lanka for the purpose of daily worship. Therefore, he started performing severe austerity to please Shiva. For example, in every night of the fourteenth lunar day, he was decapitating his own head by a large falchion for offering to his Ishta Shiva. Accordingly, one by one, Ravana offered nine heads. Finally, when he was ready to decapitate the last one (Ravana had ten heads) Shiva appeared before him and by His grace Ravana regained all nine heads. Pleased shiva wanted to grant a boon. Ravana prayed to Shiva to come with him to Lanka so that he could get His vision everyday at the auspicious Brahma-muhurta. In response, Shiva gave Ravana one of His twelve Jyotilingas (Lord Shiva is said to have revealed himself to his true devotees in the form of a Jyoti or light. On their request to reside by them for an eternity, he installed himself near them, as Linga). However, He added the condition – wherever Ravana would place Him, He will remain there forever.

Ravana started walking with that divine Jyotilinga. Ravana was a mighty king who had put gods under control. If he could establish Jyotilinga in Lanka, condition of gods would be awful. Consequently, Indra, the king of gods, became very worried. Under direction of Indra, god Varundeva entered in the stomach of Ravana and initiated a strong urge of urination. Meanwhile, Indra arrived there in disguise as a Brahmin. Ravana hurriedly handed over Jyotilinga to Indra and went on releasing himself from the natural pressure. Indra took the advantage of the situation; he placed the Jyotilinga on ground and disappeared.

Ravana tried his best to lift the Jyotilinga from the ground; but as promised by Shiva, He would remain there forever, nothing could move Him from that place. With great disappointment Ravana went back to Lanka. This Jyotilinga was initially given the name of Ravaneshvara. In subsequent period, Vaijugoala, a devotee of shiva, received command in dream and accordingly performed daily puja of Ravaneshvara. Later on, from the name of "Vaijnath", this jyotilinga had received the present name of Vaidyanatha.

Grand celebration is performed in Vaidyanath during full-Moon of Bhadra (August – September), Shiva-Ratri, Sri Panchami, and last day of Chaitra (March – April). A hermitage called Tapovana is situated about five miles away. There is a hearsay that in ancient period Ravana performed severe austerity in this Tapovana to obtain boon from Shiva. In modern time, many sadhus became siddha by performing sadhana in this sacred Tapovana; as an example, name of celebrated spiritual master Sri Sri Valananda Brahmachari can be mentioned. There is a temple called Kundeshvari in the Tapovana.

Anyway, Bam had to starve for the day; nobody offered any food. As a result, in his typical style, Bam greeted Vaidyanatha with adjective – "Chid Khatash" means very narrow-minded. Next day, understanding his condition, a kind-hearted Brahmin arranged rice meal for Bam. After meal, Bam started towards Seuri with a group of carters.

3.42 Sri Bam in Seuri

Traveling for six days from Vaidyanath Dham, Bam reached at Seuri. With every step towards Tarapith, he was feeling more joy and energy. Hereinbefore, Bam visited Seuri two times with Durgadas Sarkar.

Anyway, while wandering in Seuri, tired Bam arrived at the famous Kali temple. Dakshinakali, presiding deity of this temple, is a very living goddess. Once, devotee of goddess Kali Kaliprasad Mukhopadhyay, the finance minister of King Vir Hambhir of Vishnupur, received a divine command in dream from Ma Kali. She asked Kaliprasad to install Her in a temple. Kaliprasad instructed his son Kuladananda Mukhopadhyay to fulfill this divine command. Accordingly, Kuladananda built a temple in sacred place Seuri and installed Ma Dakshinakali on a very auspicious day of Chaitra (March - April). By generations, descendents of Kuladananda has been maintaining the glorious tradition of serving Kalima.

When Bam arrived at this famous Kali temple, he became happy to notice the sincerity and devotion of beneficiary of the temple Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay. Bam was treated with respect by the temple authority. He spent that night in the temple and on the next morning started traveling towards Tarapith.

3.43 Return to Tarapith

Traveling for the whole day from Seuri, Bam arrived at Sainthia. There is a famous Satipith in Sainthia; Devi is Nandini and Bhairava is Nandikishore. When Bam was taking rest in the Satipith, a Brahmin merchant of Sainthia respectfully invited Bam to his house. Bam spent that night in the merchant's house and on the next morning started traveling towards Tarapith.

Finally, after walking for the whole day, in the evening Bam arrived at his most beloved Tarapith. After traveling for about three and half months without any break, ultimately, he reached at the super peaceful lap of Tarama. During this long journey, Bam had to face unlimited hardships; scarcity of food and sleepless night were quite normal incidents. In addition, he had to walk on foot hundreds of miles.

Anyhow, Bam was overwhelmed with unbounded joy and like a small child started rolling and dancing at the Shimultala. This was a spontaneous and pure expression of love and respect of lost child after returning to his dearest Mother. Both gracious Tarama and Her dependent child Bam realized the unbearable agony of separation. Thus, with tears in his eyes, Bam prayed to Tarama for never allow him to be separated from Her divine association.

Pandas were astonished by his return without Mokshadananda. Bam told them that Mokshadananda took him to Kashi; there Mother Annapurna and Father Vishvanatha gracefully reside, but for him this shmashana of Tarapith was dearer than any other place in the world. After a while, Mokshadananda returned to Tarapith. He was surprised to see Bam. Also, he reprimanded Bam lightly. Then, everybody could know the real event. However, as usual, Bam was unperturbed. He could feel that by the will of Tarama his time of revelation is about to occur shortly.

Bam was perfect in all senses – perfect in devotion, perfect in knowledge, and also perfect in unbounded love for Tarama; so he was always in complete union with Mother Tara. As a wave belongs fully to ocean, Bam belonged entirely to Tarama. A wave originates in ocean, stays in ocean, and finally dissolves in ocean. Similarly, Bam was created in Tarama, lived in Tarama, and ultimately unified with Tarama. Wave and ocean are different looking, but basically they are identical; real nature of both is water. Thus, Tarama and Bam were although outwardly dual in nature, but inwardly they were nondual or absolute.

Two mahavakyas or great pronouncements of non-dualism are: "*So Ham*" and "*Tat Tvam Asi*". So Ham in mystical interpretations suggests the identification or dissolution of the Ego with the "Other": "That I am". When the "I" merges with the "That", the ego of the "I" identity merges with the Other, who is Brahman or God. *Tat Tvam Asi* or "Thou art that," means that the Self – in its original or primordial state – is identical with the Ultimate Reality that is the source of all phenomena.

Bam was completely integrated as a small wave in the infinite ocean of Brahmamayi Tarama (Bama). Thus, this supreme oneness of Bam and Bama is a majestic example of radiant mahavakyas of non-dualism – "*So Ham*" and "*Tat Tvam Asi*".

End of Part 3 of Mahapith Tarapith.

APPENDIX 1: Indian Predictive Astrology

Introduction to Birth Chart According to Vedic Astrology

The birth chart or horoscope is the picture of the heavens at the time of one's birth. Therefore, the parameters that are required to cast a birth chart are: date of birth, time of birth, and place of birth (Latitude and Longitude).

There are two parts in astrology. One is casting the chart or deriving the chart from the person's date, time and place of birth as inputs. Second is the prediction part which involves predicting the future of the person based on the cast birth chart. A general discussion is made on a few basic terminologies of Indian or Vedic astrology:

Zodiac

Indian astrology considers the earth as the center, and all other heavenly bodies moving around it in one manner or other. Imagine a belt or a path in the sky, some 18 degrees of arc in width, running around the earth. Groups of stars, to all appearance fixed, are studded along this imaginary belt. Because of lack of apparent motion, these are called nakshatras. This imaginary belt, with nakshatras studded on it, is called the zodiac. The zodiac forms the reference point for fixing up the position of any planet or star in the sky. Since it encircles the earth, it is comprised of 360 degrees. In contrast to the fixed nakshatras, grahas or planets are moving heavenly bodies to grab a nakshatra.

Grahas (Planets)

According to the Vedas, the planets are the instruments of God, by which the law of Karma operates. The Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu, are called the 9 "Grahas" which Sanskrit meaning is: "to grab" or "to hold". Vedic astrology ignores Neptune, Uranus, and Pluto.

The nine grahas used in Indian astrology are described in the following table:

English Name	Sanskrit Name	Represents
Sun	Ravi	Soul, will power, father, life, glory, health, etc.
Moon	Chandra	Mind, emotions, mother, domestic comfort, etc.
Mars	Kuja or Mangala	Energy, courage, younger brothers and sisters, etc.
Merc.	Budha	Speech, Intelligence, maternal uncle, trade, etc.
Jup.	Guru	Knowledge, spirituality, research, children, etc.
Ven.	Shukra	Spouse, sex life, music, arts, gems, wines, etc.
Sat.	Shani	Hard work, sorrow, old men, servants, workers, etc.
Rahu	Rahu	Worldly desires and benefits, ignorance, etc.
Ketu	Ketu	Moksha, wisdom, occultism and spirituality, etc.

Rashi (Sign)

From the astrological point of view, for the purpose of charting the planetary positions and calculations etc, the 360 degrees of the zodiac is divided into twelve equal parts, called rashi or sign, of 30 degrees each. This is the first basic division. A planet located anywhere along the zodiac may be considered as located in a particular sign, depending upon which twelfth division of the zodiac it is in. Nine planets own certain signs, represent several things in our life, have several inherent qualities and influence certain facets of our life. It all depends on how these planets are placed and in which signs they are placed.

The names of the 12 Rashis (Zodiac signs) in their natural order and their rulers are described in the following table:

Sign	Rashi	Lord	Nature	Extent in degrees
Aries (Ar)	Mesha	Mars	Fire	00:00 degree to 30:00'
Taurus (Ta)	Vrisha	Venus	Earth	30:00 degrees to 60:00'
Gemini (Ge)	Mithuna	Mercury	Air	60:00 degrees to 90:00'
Cancer (Ca)	Karkata	Moon	Water	90:00 degrees to 120:00'
Leo (Le)	Simha	Sun	Fire	120:00 degrees to 150:00'
Virgo (Vi)	Kanya	Mercury	Earth	150:00 degrees to 180:00'

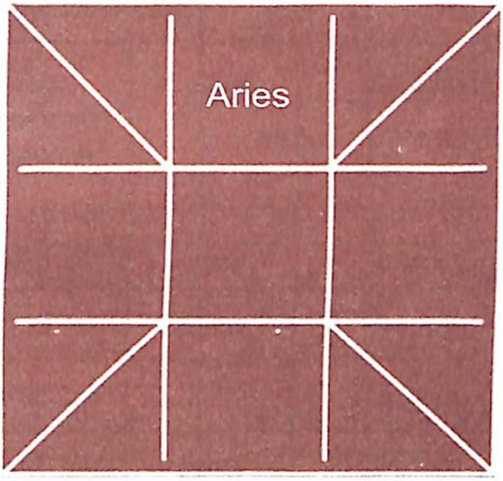
Sign	Rashi	Lord	Nature	Extent in degrees
Libra (Li)	Tula	Venus	Air	180:00 degrees to 210:00'
Scorpio (Sc)	Vrișhchika	Mars	Water	210:00 degrees to 240:00'
Sagittarius (Sa)	Dhanu	Jupiter	Fire	240:00 degrees to 270:00'
Capricorn (Cp)	Makara	Saturn	Earth	270:00 degrees to 300:00'
Aquarius (Aq)	Kumbha	Saturn	Air	300:00 degrees to 330:00'
Pisces (Pi)	Meena	Jupiter	Water	330:00 degrees to 360:00'

Moon (Chandra) has a very special place in Indian astrology. Moon rules mind and mind controls all human performance. Therefore, the rashi it occupies in the birth chart (and which is called Janma Rashi) takes on a very special significance.

Astrology columns in the newspaper and magazines use sign (Sun sign) to establish general personality characteristics. Your Sun sign is NOT your Janma Rashi (Birth sign).

We will use East Indian or Maithili method for chart analysis. This type of chart, follows the fixed sign method of the South Indian style chart, but the charting is done anti-clockwise, starting from Aries, followed by Taurus, Gemini etc.

East Indian Chart



The Nakshatras or Star Constellations

Concept of Nakshatras or stars is a hallmark of Vedic astrology. Unlike Western astrology, use of this additional parameter other than sign has made astrological prediction in Vedic astrology much more accurate. Long before man invented the telescopes the Vedic seers could isolate 27 star clusters which have profound effects on human beings and other living things on earth. Each star group is represented by one important star. Each star occupies an arc of 13 degrees and 20 minutes of the zodiac. Each star is divided into four parts (padas) of which is an arc of 3 degrees and 20 minutes. Each nakshatra has a specific ruler, one of the nine grahas. Also, each sign covers specific nakshtras extending nine padas. The nakshatras act as a filter through which the grahas act. Take Sun at Aries 10-00; this corresponds to Ashwini, which is ruled by Ketu. Sun therefore has an influence from Ketu, and we need to look at the disposition of Ketu to fully understand the influence of Sun.

A table summarizing the nakshatras is given below.

Nakshatra Number	**Nakshatra**	**Ruler**	**Start (Degree – Minute)**	**End (Degree – Minute)**
1	Ashwini	Ketu	Ari 0-00	Ari 13-20
2	Bharani	Venus	Ari 13-20	Ari 26-40
3	Krittika	Sun	Ari 26-40	Tau 10-00
4	Rohini	Moon	Tau 10-00	Tau 23-20
5	Mrigasira	Mars	Tau 23-20	Gem 6-40
6	Ardra	Rahu	Gem 6-40	Gem 20-00
7	Punarvasu	Jupiter	Gem 20-00	Can 3-20
8	Pushya	Saturn	Can 3-20	Can 16-40
9	Ashlesha	Mercury	Can 16-40	Leo 0-00
10	Magha	Ketu	Leo 0-00	Leo 13-20
11	Poorva Phalguni	Venus	Leo 13-20	Leo 26-40
12	Uttara Phalguni	Sun	Leo 26-40	Vir 10-00
13	Hasta	Moon	Vir 10-00	Vir 23-20

Nakshatra Number	Nakshatra	Ruler	Start (Degree – Minute)	End (Degree – Minute)
14	Chitra	Mars	Vir 23-20	Lib 6-40
15	Svati	Rahu	Lib 6-40	Lib 20-00
16	Visakha	Jupiter	Lib 20-00	Sco 3-20
17	Anuradha	Saturn	Sco 3-20	Sco 16-40
18	Jyeshta	Mercury	Sco 16-40	Sag 0-00
19	Mula	Ketu	Sag 0-00	Sag 13-2
20	Poorva Ashahra	Venus	Sag 13-2	Sag 26-40
21	Uttara Ashahra	Sun	Sag 26-40	Cap 10-0
22	Shravana	Moon	Cap 10-0	Cap 23-20
23	Dhanishtha	Mars	Cap 23-20	Aqu 6-40
24	Shatabhisha	Rahu	Aqu 6-40	Aqu 20-00
25	Poorva Bhadrapada	Jupiter	Aqu 20-00	Pis 3-20
26	Uttara Bhadrapada	Saturn	Pis 3-20	Pis 16-40
27	Revati	Mercury	Pis 16-40	Ari 00-00

In Vedic astrology, Moon represents the conscious mind which is like sponge absorbing qualities with which it comes in contact with. The nakshatra in which your Moon is placed at the time of your birth is called your Janma Nakshatra. Your Janma Nakshatra determines your thinking pattern, nature as well as basic destiny. It also determines the instincts as well as the subconscious aspects of the personality.

The Twelve Bhavas or Houses

Due to the rotation of the earth on its axis, the signs will ascend (rise) on the sky on the eastern horizon of the earth, becoming visible in the sky, and descend on the western horizon to become invisible again in relationship with a specific location in the earth. At the moment of birth of a person or of the beginning of an event, one of those signs will be rising on the eastern horizon. The exact point or degree of the sign that is rising, which intersects the horizon is called the Ascendant or Lagna which is always in the first house. The next rising sign after the ascending sign then becomes the second house, the rising sign after that the third house, and so on up to twelve houses called "Bhavas". In East Indian chart style, house number is always counted in anticlockwise direction. 9 planets occupy 12 houses, so 9X12 or 108. Also, 27 nakshatras occupy 108 padas. Thus, 108 represent whole of existence, a very auspicious number in our Hindu spiritual life.

The lords of the signs as mentioned earlier i.e., Mars for Aries, Venus for Taurus etc., become the lords of your houses falling in those signs. If the lord of the house is also the lord of the sign, then planet is said to be in his own house or Swasthana or Swakshetra. A house karaka (indicator) is a planet which by its very nature corresponds to the significations of a particular house.

Each house corresponds to a specific dimension of experience, a specific area of life. The first house represents the beginning and the twelfth or last house represents the end; thus, the 12 houses represent the whole cycle of life and the different levels of experiences that the individual can have. The first house is considered as the most important house since it marks the origin, the contact between the sky and the earth.

Following table of 12 houses indicates major areas and also their karakas:

Hse #	Name	Individual	Physical	Social	House Karaka
1	Tanu = Self/Body Lagna/ Ascendant (Rising Sign)	Innate Nature, Ego, Intellect, Happiness/ Grief	Head, General Health, Vigor, Complexion	Appearance, Social level	Sun
2	Dhana = Wealth	Expression	Face, Throat and Neck	Family, Dependants	Jupiter
3	Sahaja = Born Together	Courage, Velour, Vitality, Cause of Death	Arms, Shoulders, Hands	Co-borns, Servants Mars	
4	Bhandu = Relatives	Home, Belief, Happiness, Learning, Confidence	Chest, Heart, Lungs	Mother, Relatives, Friends	Moon
5	Putra = Son	Progeny, Knowledge, Intellect, Inclinations of the Mind	Stomach, liver Gallbladder, Kidneys	Children	Jupiter

Hse #	Name	Individual	Physical	Social	House Karaka
6	Ari = Enemy	Obstacles, Distress, Vices, Mental disease	Physical Disease, Ulcers, Intestine	Enemies, Maternal Uncle, Step-mother,	Mars, Saturn
7	Yuvati = Wife	Relationship Desires, Love	Region below the Navel, Bladder	Spouse, Business Partner	Venus
8	Randhra = Vulnerable Point	Death and Longevity	Reproductive & Excretory Organs	Enemies	Saturn
9	Dharma = Natural Law	Destiny, Fortune, Mantra, Religion, Benevolence, Wisdom, Penance	Thighs Father, Grand-Children, Wife's Brother, Brother's Wife.	Guru,	Jupiter
10	Karma = Action/ Profession	Manifest Power, Authority, Status, Honor, Position, Respect, Fame	Knees	Father, Government	Mercury, Jupiter, Sun

Hse #	Name	Individual	Physical	Social	House Karaka
11	Labha = Gain	Income, Prosperity, Hopes, Aspirations & their fulfillment, Friends	Calves, Ankles	Elder Co-born, Children's Spouse	Jupiter
12	Vyaya = Loss	Expense, Fall, Sins, Own Death, Foreign Journey, Pilgrimage, Enlightenment	Feet about Enemies, Father's Co-born	Tidings	Saturn

The 1st, 5th, and 9th houses are called Trikonas which are the most powerful and auspicious houses. The 1st, 4th, 7th, and 10th houses are called Kendras; they are also auspicious and powerful houses next to the Konas. The 3rd and the 11th houses are called Upachayas or houses of growth. The 6th, 8th, and 12 houses are called Dusthanas or bad houses.

Understanding the relationship between the inherent energy of each sign and its correspondence to a specific house, plus the influence of the planets on those houses and their interrelationship, is the basis of the chart interpretation.

Relationships

Planets are in exalted (tungi or uchcha), debilitated (neecha), mooltrikona, or swastana (own house) based on specific position in a particular sign. A planet is in the best condition when he is exalted. The next best placement is called mooltrikona, followed by its swasthana, followed by mitrasthana or friend's house and the worst condition is neecha. Based on their natural qualities the planets have some friends, enemies and neutrals. The following chart illustrates this inter-planetary friendship.

Planet	Friends	Enemies	Neutrals
Sun	Moon, Mars, Jup	Venus, Saturn	Mercury
Moon	Sun, Mercury	- - - - - - - -	Mars, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn
Mars	Sun, Moon, Jupiter	Mercury	Venus, Saturn
Mercury	Sun, Venus	Moon	Mars, Jupiter, Saturn
Jupiter	Sun, Moon, Mars	Mercury, Venus	Saturn
Venus	Mercury, Saturn	Sun, Moon	Mars, Jupiter
Saturn	Mercury, Venus	Sun, Moon, Mars	Jupiter

Drishti (Aspects), Conjunction, and Planetary Yoga

Planets that aspect another planet give the result of their natural tendency, and the house(s) they rule. Aspects from a natural benefic strengthen a planet and aspects from a natural malefic weaken it. All planets fully (100%) aspect the seventh house, or planets located therein, from their own position. In addition, the outer planets (Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) have been granted special aspects. Thus Mars also fully aspects houses 4 and 8, Jupiter houses 5 and 9, and Saturn houses 3 and 10. Also, Rahu and Ketu aspect the 5th and the 9th houses from their positions. The remaining planets cast a quarter glance (ekpada – 25%) on houses 3 and 10, half an aspect (dvipada – (50%) on houses 5 and 9, and three-quarter aspect (tripada – 75%) on houses 4 and 8. Aspect is always made in forward (anticlockwise for East Indian chart) direction.

Two or more planets that occupy the same sign and house form a powerful and influential relationship with one another; this is called conjunction. The results of these conjunctions of planets create planetary yogas which may be auspicious or detrimental based on whether they are benefics or malefics from the lagna point of view.

Dasha

After analyzing the strengths and conditions etc of the planets, one is in a position to know what kind of results they are going to give. But when the results are going to fructify can be learnt by studying the dasha of the planets. The dashas are the ruling periods of planets. Vimshottari (120 years life span) and Ashtottari (108 years life span) are the popular dasha systems. In Vimshottari Dasha system, each period, the first of which is determined by the Janma Nakshatra, is ruled by a different planet in a specific order.

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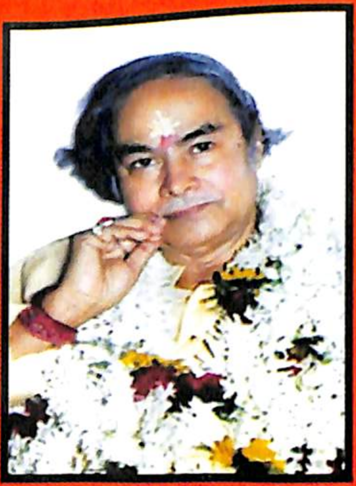
End of Volume 1 of Mahapith Tarapith.

Let us take refuge at the Lotus Feet of Mother Tara, the Savioress. Sri Durga, Jay Tara



World famous author of classic *Mahapith Tarapith*, spiritual master Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay, was born at a very auspicious moment on Wednesday, 9 January 1935, in a siddha (enlightened) Brahmin family at Tamta village of Faridpur district in East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Many celebrated siddha sadhakas were born in this reputed family. Father Digindra Kumar Gangopadhyay was a spirited and religious person. Mother Nibedita Devi also was very kind hearted and religious woman. The author is the youngest of their nine children. At his childhood, he received bija mantra from the celebrated siddha sadhaka Sri Sri Ramthakur. In his boyhood, he was engaged in sadhana of Lord Sri Ramachandra and celebrated His birthday for ten years.

He became famous as poet and playwright even during student life. When he was just student of B.A. Honors course, he edited *Smriti* and *Anandam* periodicals; at that time, he received all India recognition as amateur palmist and astrologer; later, he was recognized at international level. Along with his composition of literary works and activity as an editor, he came in close contact with many India famous saints and scholars.

His publications on poetry and drama received multiple prizes; Many of his plays and songs were broadcasted by Radio and Television stations. Stories, poems, dramas, songs, and articles composed by him in Bengali, English, and German languages were published in many reputed journals and newspapers.

There was a fundamental change in his life when he visited Tarapith in 1969 at the age of 34 years. During subsequent period of 25 years, he composed his magnum opus *Mahapith Tarapith* in Bengali language in five volumes. This is the most authentic historical, spiritual, and biographical book on Tarama, Tarapith, and Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. In the history of Indian spiritual writings, *Mahapith Tarapith* has already earned an envious place of immortality. "*Mahapith Tarapith*" movie was made in 1989; Bamdev award was received from Bharatiya Sanskriti Sammelan in 1990; and Michael Madhusudan award was received in1992.

He had delivered many captivating speeches on complex spiritual subjects ranging from Yoga, Tantra, Geeta, History of Indian Sadhana Systems, etc.

Guided by the divine force, he had composed another Bengali classic, *Aloukik Lilay Sri Ramkrishna, Ma Saroda, Swamiji* (Miracle of Sri Ramkrishna, Ma Saroda, and Swamiji) in three volumes.

Sri Bipul Kumar Gangopadhyay is a siddha sadhak and also blessed child of Tarama. He is the chosen guru of Kali yuga to spread the glory of Tarama and Sri Sri Bamakhyapa. Under his direction, many of his disciples and devotees are engaged in this divine mission of the age throughout the world. In pursuance of this objective, English translation of *Mahapith Tarapith* Vol. 1 has been performed by his disciple Dipak Bhattacharya.